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Big Kids

THERE'S NO STOPPING THEM NOW

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Bob Riha, Jr.

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Drugs and Budgets

It's getting very hard these days to pick up a newspaper without seeing an article about a drug-related tragedy of one sort or another.

But amid all these headlines about drug abuse, there is one piece of good news. The number of students using drugs, according to a new national survey spotlighted in this month's *NEA Today*, is dropping.

That number is dropping, experts say, because drug abuse education efforts are beginning to pay off. Hard work by NEA members the nation over is helping young people avoid the drug habit.

Unfortunately, for young people already hooked on drugs, there's only so much we as educators can do—because adequate treatment programs simply do not exist.

We can convince young people to try to kick their addiction. But there's often no place to send them for help. Nationally, there are now more than 6 million Americans dependent on drugs—and only 250,000 slots in treatment programs.

In other words, in the fight against drug abuse, rhetoric is far outstripping the reality. Our nation's political leaders say they're *for* a national campaign against drug abuse. They're just not willing to fully fund it.

Sound familiar? We hear the same refrain about education in general—all the time. Political leaders routinely wax eloquent about the importance of education to our nation's future. But somehow that eloquence never seems to translate into the funding support our schools so badly need.

The latest example is the federal budget now before Congress.

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

Back in February, the White House proposed a federal budget that would include some $441 million in spending for new education programs.

That was cheering news—until we saw the fine print. Overall federal aid to education would *not* be raised to keep up with inflation. That means existing federal education efforts would get almost half a billion dollars less than they need to operate at current levels.

All of us realize, of course, that the huge federal deficit creates considerable pressure to cut spending.

What I don't understand is why that pressure isn't felt more equally across the federal budget. A case in point: The budget that the White House has proposed for next year includes what budget officials call a "freeze" on military spending.

On closer inspection, this freeze turns out not to be a freeze at all. The Pentagon budget would actually go up 4 percent—enough to cover inflation.

The bottom line? The military budget is "frozen," yet loses no buying power. The education budget is "increased" with money for some new programs. Yet, in real dollar terms, education ends up with less federal support.

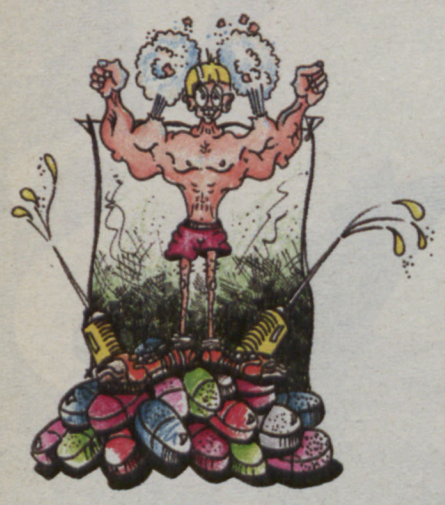
How could this be? Why is there enough funding to keep inflation from eroding military spending and not enough to do the same for education?

These are questions that ought to bother all Americans, not just educators and parents.

Last month, in San Diego, an NEA national conference brought together one of America's top business leaders, Chrysler's Lee Iacocca, with some of our country's most thoughtful economists and educators.

The speakers at our conference didn't agree on everything. But they did agree that, in today's incredibly competitive world economy, the only true national security is a well-educated American people. Isn't it time our budget priorities reflected that reality?

TRENDS



Steroid Abuse 'Rampant' Among High Schoolers

Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson's drug problem has focused attention on what one expert calls "rampant" steroid abuse among high school students.

Richard Lapchick, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, says he's "seen estimates that 40 percent of purchases of steroids are made by boys under 16."

Steroids are both physically and psychologically addictive. Steroid abuse can cause liver, kidney, and heart disease, eating compulsions, insomnia, depression, and cancer.

Several organizations have developed resources to help teach about the dangers of steroid abuse. For information, contact the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115, or the Steroids Are Big Trouble campaign, University of Minnesota, 516 15th Ave., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

Clews to the Cauze Of Pour Speling

Adolescence, adolessence, adolesense, adolecense, or *adolecence.*

Believible, believable, beleiveable, beleivable, or *believeable.*

You may know the right spelling when you see it alone—but suppose it's mixed in with others that are a letter or so off? Can you pick it out—and then repeat it afterward?

According to a new study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, the more you're exposed to an incorrect spelling, the more likely you are to use it yourself.

The study's conclusion: teaching techniques and spelling tests that use incorrect spellings may do more harm than good.

Loss of Sleep Saps Creativity

Pulling an all-nighter may help students do well on multiple choice or true-false questions, but the lack of sleep could backfire if they're studying for an essay test.

New research by British psychophysiologist James Horne shows that loss of sleep depletes creative faculties, undermining spontaneity, flexibility, and originality.

Dr. Horne says lack of sleep causes something to "go wrong with cerebral function," disturbing a fundamental part of the decision-making process. After losing one night's sleep, Horne says, "your mind becomes more rigid and you stick to known ways of doing things."

Some Predictions For the Future

Here are a few of the latest forecasts from The World Future Society, publisher of *The Futurist* magazine.

► By the turn of the century, the average car will be mostly plastic. It will last about 22 years.

► By the 1990s, animal and plant species may become extinct at the rate of 10,000 per year.

► New microcomputing technology may reduce automobile accidents to 10 percent of currert levels and make seat belts obsolete.

► By 1995, most adults will work a 32-hour week. (That won't include teachers, though: students' workdays are expected to get longer.)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Is Drug Use Down?

The numbers say yes, but daily headlines about drug-related violence say no. Which is it?

Drug use down. That message made the front pages of newspapers all over the country recently, as the press reported that the number of high school seniors using marijuana and cocaine has dropped to its lowest level in more than 10 years.

This finding—from a federally financed survey of 16,000 high school seniors conducted annually by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research—struck many newspaper readers as more than a little bit strange.

How could drug use be down when newspapers are headlining, on an almost daily basis, stories about drug-related violence, gang activity, and AIDS cases spread through intravenous drug abuse? How could drug use be down when the public, for the third year in a row, has told Gallup pollsters that student drug abuse is the biggest problem facing local schools?

"The public perception has been that things are getting worse because of all the violence," explains Richard Towers, author of the NEA Professional Library's *How Schools Can Help Combat Student Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. "But when we look at marijuana use, we've seen a steady decline almost every year since 1979."

Towers, involved since 1970 in preventing substance abuse, says the decline was obscured by the sudden crack epidemic a few years ago.

"Now we're seeing even cocaine usage drop," he notes. "All the prevention programs and intervention programs we've been working on so hard are having an effect. For the first time we're graduating kids who've been getting the antidrug message since kindergarten."

And the messages students receive outside of school are changing, too.

"It's already been several years since Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, and rap groups have come out publicly to tell kids drugs are no good," says Towers.

But Towers is quick to emphasize that the encouraging statistics shouldn't lead educators to minimize in any way the drug problem.

"The kids who are using drugs are using more serious drugs and are involved in more violence," Towers explains.

And the statistics that show declining *student* drug use, adds Towers, are based on data only from young people still in school. The University of Michigan survey does not cover dropouts, a significant percentage of teens who often have drug problems.

Still, the University of Michigan survey does convey much information about drug use. Among the findings:

► Cocaine use is down—7.9 percent of seniors say they used cocaine in 1988, compared to 13.1 percent tin 1985.

► One-third of seniors say they use marijuana. In 1979, about half of seniors reported marijuana use.

► Half the seniors report trying an illicit drug while in high school. One out of eight report trying cocaine.

► Student alcohol use is declining slightly. In 1987, 66 percent said they'd had one or more drinks in the last 30 days. A year later, 64 percent said the same thing. The proportion of seniors who'd had five or more drinks in a row in the two weeks before the survey dropped from 38 to 35 percent.

► There is no decline in student smoking, which some experts say will kill more people than all other drug use combined. Nearly one in five—18 percent—of seniors say they smoke daily.

► More students see "great risk" associated with drug use. Over half of '88 seniors—51.2 percent, up from 33.5 percent in '85—believe there is "great risk" associated with using cocaine once or twice. In 1988, 31.7 percent of seniors saw "great risk" in occasional marijuana use, compared to only 12.4 percent in 1978.

What does all this mean for the future?

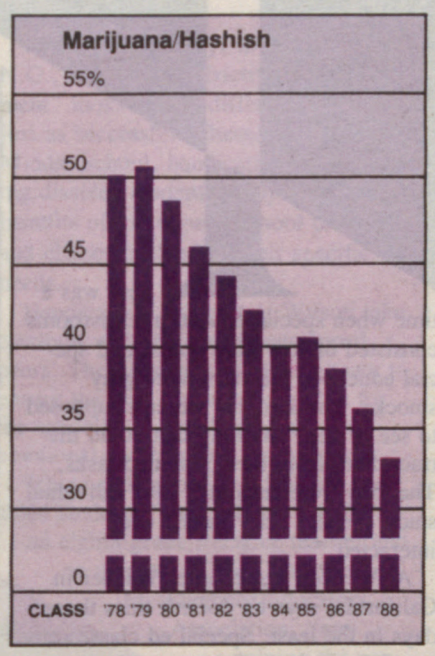
"I'm not optimistic," Towers says, "but the study shows there is hope. The statistics show that we can make a difference with many children, but they also point out that there's a lot more to be done yet.

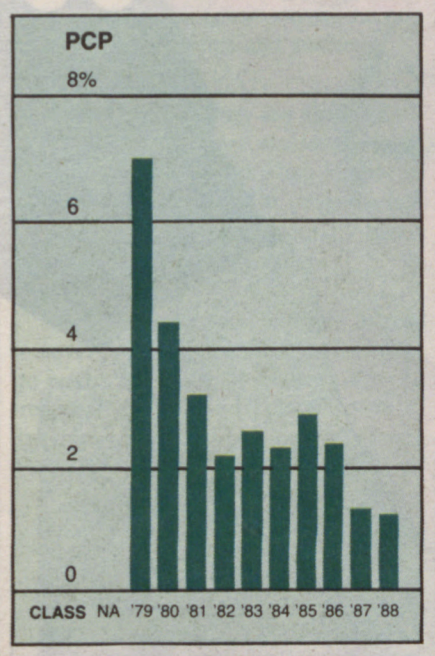
"We've gotten off to a promising start over the last decade," Towers concludes, "but the toughest part is still ahead of us."

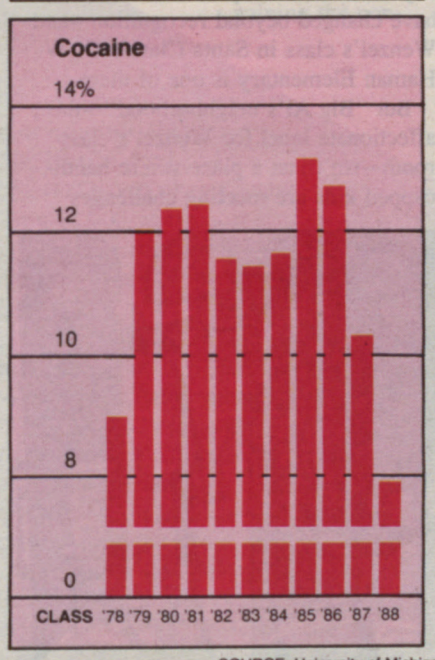
—Stefanie Weiss

To order *How Schools Can Help Combat Student Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, send $10.95 (includes postage and handling) to NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Stock No. 3291-8-000. Call 1-203-934-2669 for more information.

The percentage of high school seniors who used drugs in the last 12 months is down . . . .







. . . And the percentage who see "great risk" associated with drugs is up.

Q. How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways), if they:

Smoke marijuana occasionally?
Class of 1978: 12.4%
Class of 1988: 31.7%

Try cocaine once or twice?
Class of 1978: 33.2%
Class of 1988: 51.2%

Take one or two drinks nearly every day?
Class of 1978: 19.6%
Class of 1988: 27.3%

SOURCE: University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research

News Beat

● The baby boomlet is alive and well. A recent survey showed that **enrollments** in U.S. public schools passed the 40 million mark in September for the first time since 1981. The largest enrollment gains were in the southern and western states and in the elementary grades. Long-term projections show that enrollments will climb to 46 million by the year 2000.

● The proportion of children living in **one-parent homes** has increased dramatically since 1980. According to Census Bureau reports, 54 percent of Black children, 30 percent of Hispanic children, and 18 percent of white children lived with one parent in 1988, up from the 1980 figures of 46 percent, 21 percent, and 15 percent, respectively.

● A majority—55 percent—of those surveyed by *Parents* magazine disapprove of **corporal punishment** in the classroom, but 67 percent say it works to maintain classroom discipline. Virginia recently became the 12th state—and the first Southern state—to outlaw corporal punishment.

● Only 10 percent of Americans think their **health care** system functions "pretty well," compared to 42 percent of Canadians and 69 percent of the British. Three similar polls taken in the three countries show that Americans were by far the most critical of their health care system. Most Americans say they would prefer Canada's system of national health insurance to their own.

● Twenty percent of the **homeless** in Pennsylvania are children, concludes a comprehensive new survey. The study found that in the largest counties, fewer than half of the school-age children living in shelters for a year or more attended school.

● Between 1979 and 1986, **educational support personnel** experienced the largest gain in personal income among public education employees, NEA Research reports. ESP's personal income rose 17 percent; teachers' income went up 13 percent.

WELL PUT!

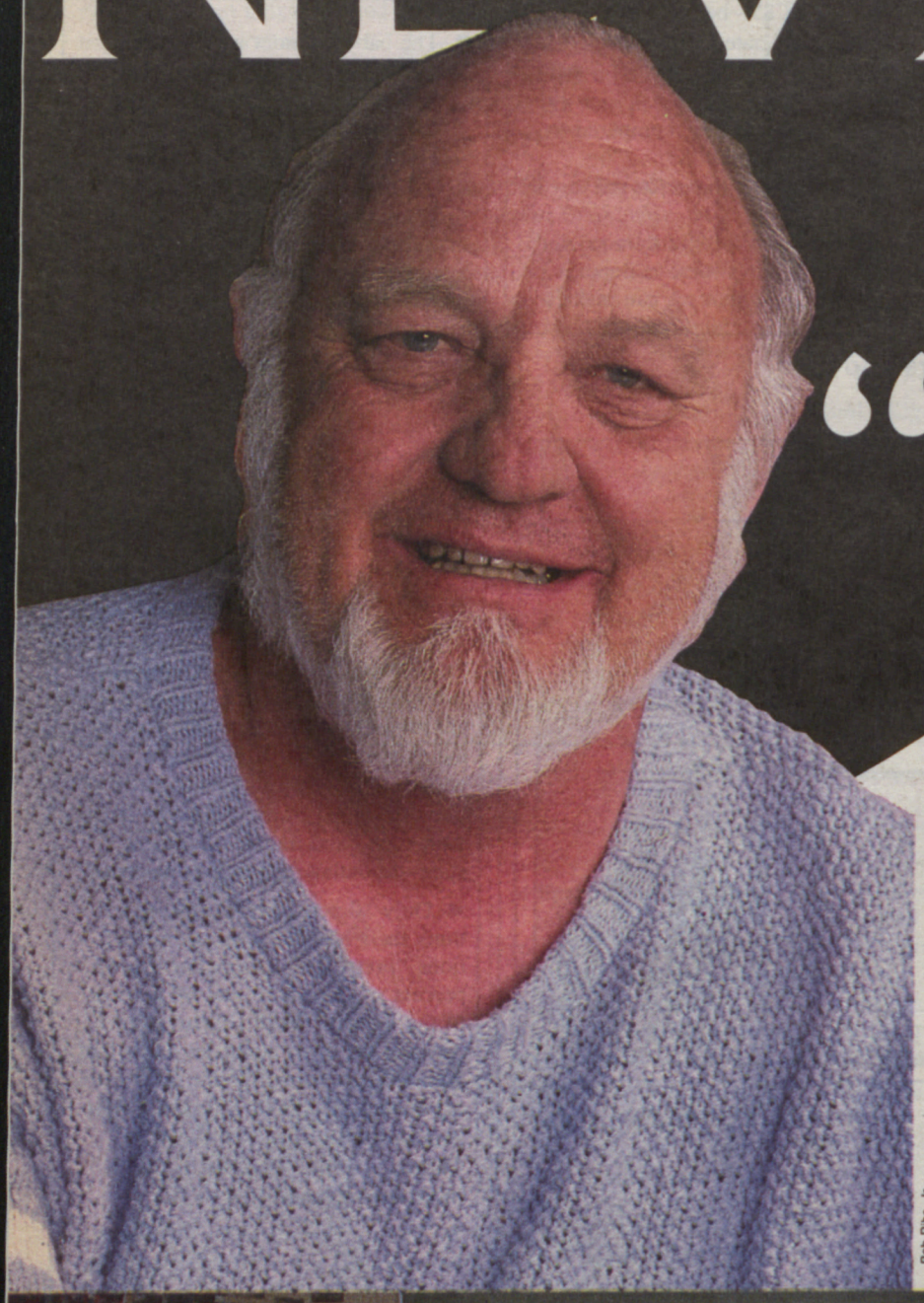
"In a completely rational society, the best of us would aspire to be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less, because passing civilization along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest honor and the highest responsibility anyone could have."

—Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca

COVER STORY

NEVER SA

Now, more than ever, handicapped youngsters are challenging and overcoming the physical and mental obstacles that face them—and learning in new ways that may help all students.



Bob Riha, Jr.

"There was a time when special education classrooms consisted of four bare walls, and special education teachers wore gray smocks. The students weren't supposed to see or hear anything that could distract them from their assigned tasks. The kids were separated into individual study carrels. They hardly ever interacted."

Al Wenzel, a special ed teacher in California, says he doesn't miss those days in the least. Special ed classrooms have changed beyond recognition—and Wenzel's class in Santa Clara's C. W. Haman Elementary is one of them.

But "Big Al's neighborhood"—the affectionate label for Wenzel's classroom—isn't just a place where handicapped kids are meeting challenges they wouldn't have been offered a few years back. It's the scene of new approaches to learning that may make sense for all kinds of students.

Wenzel is one of the many NEA members in special ed who are breaking down the barriers that separate handicapped students from their peers and special ed teachers from their colleagues.

To enter "Big Al's neighborhood," you maneuver your way past a giant inflated Godzilla—and find yourself in a magical world of color, light, and sound. In every nook, stuffed animals, traffic signs, gadgets, and posters vie for attention along with books, chalkboard, and computer.

In this warm, all-embracing environment, 11 "disabled" children—with cerebral palsy or mental retardation, with neurological, behavioral, or learning disorders—are reaching beyond what the outside world expects of them and beginning to learn.

The children's day begins with a hug. Then come exercises and drills on the alphabet, colors, and numbers. There are lessons in behavior standards and self-sufficiency, spelling and math drills, and perceptual, auditory, and phonetic exercises.

But Big Al's neighborhood is not a separate, self-contained world. Wenzel works hard to integrate his classroom with the school—and the community—around it. "Peer tutors"—students from other classes—are a regular fixture in Wenzel's class. So are local residents whom Wenzel calls "foster grandparents."

"This classroom is a microcosm of the real world," says Wenzel. "The foster grandparents come in not just to help with reading skills, but to provide encouragement and love."

Wenzel also encourages cross-age tutoring within his classroom.

"The older students help the younger ones," he explains. "When each child succeeds, whether by reading a sentence or by adding two numbers, the entire class applauds, giving the child confidence to move on."

Cindy Davis, whose 11-year-old daughter Amy is multiply handicapped,

Bob Riha, Jr.

When a student in Al Wenzel's class makes progress, everyone claps, everyone shares in the success.

COVER STORY

AY NEVER

says that Wenzel's approach has made a big difference for her daughter.

"Before entering Al's classroom, Amy was in a county program that didn't give her much attention," says Davis. "Al's classroom is a lot like her room at home. She's relaxed here, and she's very proud of what she can do. Al doesn't baby these kids—he shows them they can learn."

It's been 14 years since the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Designed to assure all handicapped children a free public education that meets "their unique needs in the least restrictive environment appropriate," the legislation set in motion a radical shift in the way exceptional children are educated. (Continued funding for handicapped education comes before Congress this year.)

Some 4.4 million handicapped children are today receiving instruction in public schools, in a variety of different "least restrictive environments." To Al Wenzel, the least restrictive environment appropriate for his particular students is a classroom that features what he calls "reverse mainstreaming"—bringing in students from other classes as tutors.

Across the country, in Charlotte, N.C., the "least restrictive environment" looks a little different—but is just as successful. There, at Wilson Middle School, handicapped and learning disabled students enjoy both the benefits of the regular school program and classes tailored to their specific needs.

Handicapped students at Wilson take electives with their nonhandicapped peers. Their teachers work as a team to ensure the best education possible for the school's 20 eighth graders with emotional and learning disabilities.

"Our handicapped and learning disabled students," notes Joyce Griffey, an eighth-grade resource teacher and a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenberg Educators Association, "are gaining the confidence they need to work in mainstream society."

"These students would have been institutionalized if it weren't for PL 94-142," adds resource teacher Delores Coffey. "Instead, they're going to high school. They've learned to form realistic expectations and continue with confidence, rather than become discouraged and drop out."

Moreover, say Griffey and Coffey, the school's special education program has increased the sensitivity of the nonhandicapped students and teachers.

For some students, the skills of independent living are challenges in themselves. At Wilcox High School in Santa Clara, Sharon Eilts prepares her class of severely and profoundly handicapped students to meet these challenges.

"For these students, learning to read a novel is less important than learning to read a bus schedule or learning responsibility in a workplace," says Eilts, a United Teachers of Santa Clara member.

"They need to learn the responsibility and the basics of cooking, cleaning, and interacting with society," she adds.

Eilts has designed a program that teaches both survival skills and work skills for future employment. For Eilts, like her colleague Al Wenzel, it's important to link what happens inside the classroom to the larger community outside. Eilts has made arrangements with local companies for job training and future employment.

"Before, these kids would have fallen through the cracks," says Eilts. "Now they're learning the skills they need to lead an independent life."

And teachers are learning, too, how to make sure that "four bare walls" don't trap teacher and students in isolation from school and community.

—Anita Merina

Charlotte, N.C., special ed teacher Kim Kehrer shows her students handicaps can be overcome.

Frameworks For Learning

Association member Rodney Reynolds uses his hands to make it easier for handicapped youngsters to learn.

"I believe there's a relationship between comfort and comprehension," says therapy equipment maker Rodney Reynolds. "If a child isn't comfortable, it's going to be hard to learn."

Reynolds works for the Prince George's County (Md.) Schools, putting children in a position to learn. With a circular saw, band saw, router, industrial sewing machine, and other electrical gadgets, Reynolds works magic, building wooden furniture and adaptive equipment for handicapped children.

For self-abusive children, Reynolds fashions vinyl-and-velcro limb splints—which he and a physical therapist invented—to keep their arms straight so they can't hurt themselves.

For children who have trouble bearing their own weight, Reynolds builds "supine standers," wooden devices that enable them to bear weight on their pelvis instead of their legs while they develop the muscle tone to stand on their own.

"I work closely with physical therapists, occupational therapists, and teachers," says Reynolds. "Together, we identify the need, then I build the appropriate equipment."

Reynolds' work saves his school district thousands of dollars each year. A supine stander Reynolds builds for $40 would cost a hefty $400 from a specialty catalog. Reynolds estimates that last year he produced $18,000 worth of equipment from $2,000 worth of materials.

"And the equipment has a guarantee as long as I'm around," adds Reynolds. "If the fit isn't quite right for the child, the teacher or parent need only contact me and I'll make the necessary adjustments."

Sometimes, a little bit of technology brings a rich reward. Special education teacher Karyn Schwartz had a 10-year-old student with cerebral palsy who didn't keep her head up.

Noting the child's love for music, Schwartz suggested a classroom tape player as a possible solution, and Reynolds went to work. He attached a simple mercury switch to the child's barrette. As long as the child's head was up, the music would keep playing, but when her head went down, the recorder shut off.

"What I do is not just mechanical," says Reynolds. "The equipment is made with loving care, because it will be coming in contact with fellow humans who need help."

Rod Reynolds produces a quarterly newsletter on adaptive equipment. To order, send the $6 annual fee (for printing and postage) to him at 8111 Gold Cup Lane, Bowie, MD 20715.

—A.M.

Chuck Burton

A supine stander crafted by Rodney Reynolds helps Ruhe Nichols stand. At left is physical therapist Ruth Flahive.

Joe Di Dio

HUMAN RIGHTS

Can You Cope with School VI•LENCE?

Some practical tips for lessening the likelihood that violence will strike your school—and what to do if it does.

Violence is destroying our schools," says NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell—and she speaks for school employees across the country. The shootings of children and teachers at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, Calif., still unnerve us. So do the gang fights that spill onto schoolyards and into classrooms. So do the ethnic confrontations sparked by such "provocations" as the way one student looks at another. So do the daily—and nightly—killings of children in the streets and at home.

Such events leave many school employees feeling afraid, helpless, resigned. But school employees, with the help of experts in making schools safe, are learning not just how to deal with their feelings but how to eliminate or reduce the violent atmosphere.

NEA Human and Civil Rights recommends that members who experience violence, either directly or indirectly, work through their Associations to—

► *Help and support one another.* Sal Zendejas, president of the Stockton Teachers Association, says STA members have adopted all the teachers at Cleveland Elementary, where a gunman killed five Southeast Asian children and wounded 29 others and one teacher with an AK-47 semiautomatic weapon, then shot himself.

Calling themselves Teachers Lending Care or TLC Givers, these STA members send flowers and computer banners to the Cleveland teachers, take them to dinner, and act as aides or take over their classes for a few hours each week. They also provide peer grief counseling, using techniques learned from a team of psychologists brought in by the California Teachers Association.

► *Eliminate the signs of violence.* Anthony Borbon, a California-based safe schools advocate and expert in gang prevention and intervention, helps schools organize to eliminate gangs by removing graffiti and litter from the campus immediately and stopping students from dressing alike, gang fashion. He also helps them find innovative ways to eliminate bullying. Borbon tells how one school handled a kid who'd been intimidating other kids into giving him their milk money. Designated the official milk-money collector, he now has to give each student a receipt and account for every penny—or leave school.

Employees in another school Borbon worked with stopped the theft of cars and car stereos by organizing student safety patrols. They also stopped drug dealing and smoking by getting parents to monitor the bathrooms, hallways, and playgrounds. "This is a great example of community involvement," Borbon says, "because it lets school employees see parents supervising their own kids instead of transferring this responsibility to the school."

► *Start work on long-range prevention.* Rita McGary is a social worker at Falls Church (Va.) High School, which until three years ago was the scene of fighting among racial groups. After mediation settled the immediate conflicts, McGary sponsored healing sessions. She helped the conflict victims—minority students—analyze the social dynamics of racial fighting in a race-based society and pick up some strategies for refusing to fight without losing self-esteem or sacrificing goals.

There's still much animosity among ethnic groups, but McGary's able to defuse tensions. She turns first to ethnically homogeneous counseling sessions focused on the students' ethnic needs and their need to mainstream, then introduces peer counseling and student leadership development.

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

Resources

National Crime Prevention Council, 733 15th Street, N.W., #540, Washington, DC 20005. The Council offers a free catalog; "Youth and Crime Prevention" (single copy free); *The Watch Out—Help Out Teen Action Kit* (42 items, including articles, resource guides, skill booklets, and program papers, for $20); and "How To Be a Teenage Crime Victim" (a poster telling teenagers what to guard against, two for $5).

National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91436. Their *School Safety Checkbook* identifies over 100 model programs on school safety ($12, including p&h).

WASHINGTON WATCH

Inside the Beltway: A Lexicon

When Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty said, "A word means just what I say it means—no more, no less," he spoke for members of Congress as well. The world of politics and government—like every other profession—uses jargon to separate insiders from outsiders.

In Washington, D.C., insiders and outsiders are determined geographically by "the Beltway" (otherwise known as Interstate 495), which circles the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. "Inside the Beltway" is a derogatory term for a way of thinking detached from the concerns of people who live in The Real World—that is, outside the Beltway.

Acronyms have long played a key part in the lingo. When discussion on Capitol Hill turns to LUST, chances are somebody's talking about leaking underground storage tanks rather than the latest Senate confirmation hearings.

Sports analogies are a rich source for newsmakers and their flacks (speechwriters/media staffers), particularly since professional sports—like politics and government—are both a game and big business.

Other terms come directly from the business world, or from the simple human desire to say something that sounds important. Following are a few choice selections of current Beltwayese.

Bottom line: Once an accounting term denoting the net total, it is now generally used to set up any dramatic conclusion, e.g., "The bottom line is, we are going to have to make the tough choices."

Making the tough choices: Patching things together until the next election.

In the field: Anywhere outside of Washington, D.C. Members of Congress have district offices in the field, and often they will hold hearings in the field to demonstrate to the folks back home that a particular issue is their number one priority.

Number one priority: Whatever is important to a particular audience or on a given day. At a Monday Rotarian luncheon: "The business of America is business, and holding the line on spending increases is our number one priority." At a Tuesday reception with a local education Association: "My mother was a teacher, and education has always been my number one priority."

Flexible freeze: Business as usual. Presidents have always recommended that some programs be cut, some increased, some frozen. President Bush's freeze is so flexible that the net effect is that some programs would be cut, some increased, some frozen.

Competitiveness: A reason given for any Congressional action, e.g., "Failure to provide substantial resources to the research into catfish hatcheries will seriously undermine our competitiveness in relation to the international marketplace." (See *bottom line* and *number one priority*, above.)

Spin doctor: A political aide assigned to translate Beltwayese into the language of The Real World.

—Michael Pons, NEA Government Relations

Local Look

MARYLAND

Some 6,000 educational support personnel in 19 Maryland counties have taken a major step toward entering the NEA family. At its February meeting the NEA Board of Directors approved direct affiliation of the Maryland State Educational Services Council (MSESC) with NEA.

"I'm thrilled and relieved," says MSESC President Gail Riley, an instructional teacher's aide at Manchester Elementary School. "With this unification we can continue to move forward. We'll be able to strengthen local operations, serve our current members, and increase our numbers. Just having the name *NEA* attached to ours gives us strength at every level. And our members will get the benefits from NEA Special Services, too."

The final step in the affiliation process is county-by-county ratification by the full MSESC membership. That's expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Riley says the affiliation means a great deal to MSESC members. "We'd looked at other unions, but none of them compared to NEA, and we were waiting anxiously for the NEA Board's approval."

LOUISIANA

Members of the St. Bernard Association of Educators have won the first contract ever bargained for school employees in their parish.

The three-year contract covers all basic employee rights and benefits for about 600 of the parish's teachers, librarians, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and pupil appraisal team members.

SBAE president Sonia Evans says it's an excellent agreement. "I think for the first time our members feel really confident, because their duties and rights are spelled out."

Among the benefits are more paid sick leave and the restoration of the normal school day with appropriate pay hikes. Earlier this year the school board cut working hours and pay to save money.

SBAE joins the St. John and Vermilion Parish Associations as one of three LAE/NEA locals to win collective bargaining rights so far.

HELP IN THE HEARTLAND

Finding a Way in Wayzata

Jim Hartmann

In the dead of winter, Wayzata (Minn.) Junior High students and staff stood shoulder to shoulder, moving hundreds of bags of food from their school to the local food bank.

This year's annual food drive at Wayzata Junior High was an overwhelming success, netting twice as much food as last year's. But the record-breaking haul left the school's teachers—members of the Wayzata Education Association—in a bit of a pickle. How were they going to deliver all that food to the local food bank?

Their solution—Hands Across Wayzata.

One blustery day last winter, 700 junior high school students lined the half-mile stretch between the school and the food bank and, like "bucket brigaders" of years past, passed hundreds of bags full of food from one hand to the next.

Perhaps even more important than the food was the publicity the event attracted. New money donors are showing up at the food bank, which serves a growing number of people in Minneapolis' western suburbs.

In planning the event, the school's teachers and staff aimed to "honor what students did in collecting the food, but also show them the real purpose of doing it," says counselor Jim Hartmann. "We wanted the students and community to realize that their help does not go to faceless strangers, but to the student in the next desk or the family across the street."

NEW HAMPSHIRE

All over Littleton, students were turning off the TV and turning on to books the first half of February, in a program organized by the Littleton Teachers' Association. During those two weeks, each participant pledged to give up a certain amount of TV (the average was an hour a day).

Students at Lakeway Elementary School, where librarian Marcia de Steuben and LTA president Stedman Calvarese initiated the project, gave up a total of 4,320 hours. Some said they usually watch TV 48 hours a week.

The community pitched in to make the program a success. Littleton's bookstore held a book fair, the library sponsored evening story hours, the radio station did interviews, and the weekly paper's editorials praised the idea. Parents cosigned the students' written pledges, often adding enthusiastic comments.

The TV reduction project had triple goals aimed at students, parents, and community: instill a love of reading, give families something other than TV to share, and show that teachers care about more than money. It succeeded, says Calvarese, on all three fronts.

IDAHO

The longest-running contract dispute in the history of the Idaho Education Association was settled this winter when the 147-member Mountain Home Education Association unanimously ratified a new master contract.

Settlement came only after 16 months of grueling negotiations and a bitter 12-day strike last May. Disagreement centered mainly on whether teachers in this small air-base town southeast of Boise should be included in decision making about policy issues (class size and preparation time, for instance). From now on, Mountain Home teachers will join their colleagues in most other Idaho districts in exercising that right.

MHEA president Ruth Ireldale feels not only that the gain was worth the wait, but that teachers got an added win. "We gained a lot of self-respect," she reports, "and the respect of the community as well."

TEXAS

Thanks to a landmark court case involving 26 teachers in Lumberton, Texas, no Texas teacher on continuing contract will ever again have to sign a "blank" contract that doesn't specify actual salary.

The custom in many Texas school districts, such as Lumberton, was for teachers to sign blank contracts in the spring. Then in August, the district would learn what the state's contribution to teacher base pay would be, and on that basis adopt its budget and fill in the blanks in the contracts. If teachers didn't like their final contract figure, they were out of luck: state law prohibited them from resigning their contracted jobs after August 1.

The lid finally blew in Lumberton in the fall of 1985, when the board took the unprecedented action of actually *lowering* teacher salaries after school had been under way for a month.

"We had teachers who took more than a $2,000 cut," recalls Lumberton Local TSTA member Susan Hogan.

TSTA backed the Lumberton teachers suit, and the Texas Supreme Court agreed 9-0 that no district could force its teachers to sign blank contracts.

OHIO

Local Associations across the state are in a better bargaining position now, thanks to the Lorain Education Association.

LEA has won an important Ohio Supreme Court ruling affirming the right to bargain all management-proposed changes in wages, hours, and terms and condition of employment.

LEA President James Ash describes the victory as "the most exciting one" in his five years as LEA president.

The dispute between LEA and the school board began in 1984, when the board announced it would eliminate two school nurse positions and instead employ 14 part-time health aides. When the board refused to bargain the issue, LEA filed the unfair labor charge that led to the Supreme Court ruling.

State Side

MIDWEST

The state's share of funding for Illinois schools has dropped so much in the past 10 years that the state now ranks 44th in the nation in per capita spending—down from seventh place a decade ago. As a result, one school district in five faces financial disaster.

The Illinois board of education's "financial watch list" now includes 198 school districts that are close to—or over—the edge of spending every dollar they take in.

The central Illinois district of Mattoon, for example, is $7 million in debt and now spends $1 out of every $6 of its budget on debt service. The Rockford school district is fighting bankruptcy and may be forced to close 11 buildings and eliminate 240 staff positions next fall. In Normal, anticipated staff cuts will push class sizes above 35.

The Illinois Education Association is calling for a tax hike to raise the state's share of education funding. Until the state makes a greater commitment, warns IEA President Lee Betterman, "The children of Illinois are not being given their fair chance for a productive future."

PACIFIC

Discussing outreach to the school community recently, the presidents of state Associations in NEA's Pacific region had a natural, but unprecedented idea: state Associations and PTAs have common concerns, so why not get together?

The idea took hold, the PTA agreed, and the result was a meeting in Portland, Oreg., that brought together not only Pacific state leaders of the two organizations, but national leaders as well.

The presidents or representatives of state Associations in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington; PTA presidents in those states; NEA Vice President Keith Geiger; and National PTA President Manya Unger all attended the three-day session.

The leaders didn't spend their time just exchanging viewpoints. They proposed such practices as regular get-togethers among key players of each state group, attendance at each other's meetings, a PTA booth at state Association conferences, teacher preservice education about the PTA, and joint social functions. In addition, the leaders from each state developed a plan for working together and identified the first activity to put that plan in motion.

PAY JUMPS 5.6 PERCENT

Average Teacher Salary Is Now $29,567

NEA Research estimates the national average teacher salary for 1988-89 at $29,567, up 5.6 percent over the 1987-88 figure of $28,031.

Below are the average teacher salaries state by state. Alaska again claims the top spot on the salary chart, followed by Connecticut, New York, California, Michigan, and Rhode Island.

The average teacher has been in the classroom for 15 years.

Average Teacher Salary

U.S.	*$29,567*	Missouri	$25,981
Alabama	25,190	Montana	24,414
Alaska	41,693	Nebraska	24,203
Arizona	28,684	Nevada	28,840
Arkansas	21,692	New Hampshire	26,703
California	35,285	New Jersey	32,923
Colorado	29,558	New Mexico	25,205
Connecticut	37,339	New York	36,500
Delaware	31,605	North Carolina	25,650
District of Columbia	37,504	North Dakota	22,249
Florida	26,648	Ohio	29,152
Georgia	28,038	Oklahoma	22,000
Hawaii	30,778	Oregon	29,500
Idaho	22,860	Pennsylvania	30,720
Illinois	31,195	Rhode Island	34,233
Indiana	28,664	South Carolina	25,060
Iowa	25,884	South Dakota	20,480
Kansas	27,401	Tennessee	25,619
Kentucky	24,920	Texas	26,513
Louisiana	22,470	Utah	23,023
Maine	24,933	Vermont	26,861
Maryland	33,700	Virginia	29,056
Massachusetts	31,670	Washington	29,176
Michigan	34,419	West Virginia	21,904
Minnesota	31,500	Wisconsin	31,046
Mississippi	22,036	Wyoming	27,685

SOUTHEAST

FTP-NEA members are hoping to address their state's minority teacher shortage by talking with potential teachers while they're still students in junior high and high school.

Under a program developed by FTP-NEA's Minority Affairs Committee and the Florida Future Educators of America (FFEA), local Associations are being encouraged to assist in establishing student chapters of FFEA.

According to FTP-NEA President Kathy Bell, the Association is making an aggressive effort to enhance the image of teaching as a profession and to give students an opportunity to learn about teaching through "hands-on" experience.

"We see many minority teachers retiring and not being replaced," notes Bell. "And many minority students are being recruited into other fields. It's time we acted."

WEST

A teacher who is certified to teach is qualified to teach. That principle was established as law by a recent decision of the Kansas Supreme Court.

The case involved James Bauer, a tenured auto mechanics teacher at Stanton County High School, who sought an open social studies position to avoid being RIF'd.

Bauer was certified in social studies, but had never taught it. Arguing that he wasn't qualified, the school board hired a nontenured teacher and RIF'd Bauer.

K-NEA brought suit on Bauer's behalf, citing an earlier Kansas Supreme Court decision which said that a tenured teacher facing a RIF who is qualified for a job should get it over a nontenured teacher. K-NEA contended that certification is synonymous with qualification.

The Kansas Supreme Court agreed: "When a teacher is 'certified,' a rebuttable presumption exists that the teacher is 'qualified.' It then becomes the burden of the school board to establish the nonexistence of the presumption by substantial evidence."

The Kansas high court ordered the district to reinstate Bauer with back pay. By that time, though, Bauer had left the state. An out-of-court settlement was eventually reached.

NORTHEAST

When the Vermont bureau of the Associated Press wanted to get 1988 election results fast—and right—it turned to Vermont-NEA: the only organization with members everywhere who could do the job. In the primaries and again in November, school employees wearing Vermont-NEA/AP identification collected election tallies as they were announced, calling them in to Election Central in Montpelier. AP assembled the primary results for the entire press corps.

To Vermont-NEA, the reporting was an important kind of community involvement. And when an appreciative AP presented the Association with $1,000, Vermont-NEA decided to reinvest the money in an appropriate way. The money will fund scholarships for members' children in 12th grade or college preparing for careers in education, journalism, or political science.

Vermont-NEA leaders hope the project will be repeated at election time every two years—bringing in $500 for a scholarship each year.

MID-ATLANTIC

What happens when the people who work in a profession are allowed to set the standards of entry? The standards are kept consistently high, says the Maryland State Teachers Association—and that's why MSTA's rallying behind Maryland Senate Bill 709.

Identical to a measure that passed Maryland's House of Delegates on a 112-17 vote, the bill would create a 25-member Professional Standards Board responsible for establishing and maintaining certification standards for teachers.

Nine classroom teachers will hold seats on the Standards Board.

"This approach ensures that the teaching license will be guarded by precisely those people most committed to improving student performance, ensuring the quality of future teachers, and protecting the integrity of the teaching profession," says MSTA President Beverly Corelle. "We're committed to the position that there must be a fully prepared, thoroughly qualified teacher for every child in every classroom in every school in Maryland."

Establishing a Professional Standards Board is only part of MSTA's big push to provide teachers with the rights to improve schools and their own profession. MSTA's effort includes a statewide radio campaign that urges the public to help give teachers a stronger voice in running the schools. The campaign is designed to stop school boards from attempting to narrow the scope of bargaining.

STUDENT HEALTH

FAT or FIT?

Helping Kids Choose

There's no question that many adults today are taking better care of their bodies by watching what they eat and drink and exercising regularly. But what about children? How do they rate when it comes to fitness and nutrition?

Answering these questions in this month's **NEA TODAY** *Student Health column is pediatric cardiologist Julia Lee, M.D. Dr. Lee, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Section on Cardiology, directs the Pediatric Preventive Cardiology Clinic at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.*

Julia Lee, M.D.

Q. First of all, what would you say is the biggest nutritional problem facing our young people?

A. I'd say there's not one greatest nutritional problem but two—obesity and anorexia nervosa. Ironically, they're at opposite ends of the food-intake spectrum. Obesity results when someone's food intake exceeds energy output. Anorexia, on the other hand, is basically self-imposed starvation that results in extreme thinness. Bulimia—binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting—falls somewhere in between: a bulimic's weight is often normal even though the eating pattern isn't.

It's estimated that 10 to 25 percent of American children are obese, including 6 to 8 percent who are super-obese. Several factors determine obesity: behavior traits, family relationships, socioeconomic class, and activity level. In addition, there's evidence suggesting that excessive television viewing has contributed to obesity in today's young people by reducing the amount of time they spend in active play.

Obese children are often discriminated against by their peers. They have less opportunity to participate in group activities, including sports—and that makes it even harder for them to burn off excess calories. Obese children don't necessarily become obese adults, but they do have a greater-than-average chance of doing so.

The potentially life-threatening eating disorders anorexia and bulimia are most common in adolescent girls who are afraid of getting fat. We don't really know what causes these disorders, but they do seem to be linked to abnormal behavioral responses to food and body image. They don't occur in societies where food is scarce; they're a product of developed countries where the "body beautiful" is considered very important.

Q. Adults are being encouraged to cut fat, cholesterol, and salt from their diets. Should children do likewise?

A. While we know for a fact that doing these things can lessen the risk of heart disease in adults, the same hasn't been proven for children. Still, the benefits of reducing dietary fat and cholesterol may be even greater for children since they can expect to benefit from many decades of lower blood cholesterol.

In general we believe it's okay to cut some fat and cholesterol from a child's diet. Some pediatricians are concerned, however, that severely altering the diets of children might limit their growth and development. Any cuts should be carried out in a way that ensures the child still is getting adequate nutrition.

Q. What's the ideal diet for children?

A. The best diet for children is still one that's based on a balanced intake from the four basic food groups. It's also a good idea to modestly cut back on the number of calories that come from fat—particularly saturated fats like coconut and palm oils.

Q. Fast and so-called "junk" foods seem to have become a fact of life. What part, if any, should they have in a child's diet?

A. There's really nothing wrong with fast food in itself—it's convenient, and there's a variety to choose from. What's important is for people to choose wisely.

It's true that most fast foods are high in fat and sodium and low in calcium and iron. More fast food chains, however, now have salad and potato bars, and many are improving the nutritional content of their other dishes. These changes are largely due to consumer demand and are a good example of how consumers can bring about improvement.

Q. What about snacking?

A. Snacking is a challenge for Americans of all ages, but especially for teens, who often get as much as 25 to 30 percent of their total daily calories from snacks. Most popular snacks—like chips, soda, and candy—are processed foods high in fats and sugars. But teenagers can get nourishment while they snack by choosing foods like cheese, fruit, yogurt, nuts, and vegetables.

Q. We can hardly talk about nutrition without also mentioning fitness. Just how fit are children today?

A. It's a little hard to judge. On the one hand, there's concern that American children are becoming less fit as they spend more time in sedentary activities like watching television. On the other, an increasing number of communities are offering organized physical activities, like intramural sports leagues, that get kids moving.

Q. Are school P.E. classes enough, or do kids need other exercise classes as well?

A. We can't depend on—or expect—schools to provide all the exercise kids need. One way we can help get them additional sources of exercise is to encourage our communities to offer top-quality activities—like dance classes and intramural sports leagues.

Q. Besides traditional sources of children's exercise, what are some that are popular today?

A. Traditionally, children's exercise focused on things like how fast kids could run or how many sit-ups they could do. Today, more and more physical education experts are concerned with promoting coordination and flexibility.

Traditional exercise programs also were geared toward the gifted athletes. The trend now is to include all children, regardless of their ability, and to recognize participation—not just performance.

Q. Where do school employees fit in? They obviously can't dictate what students eat. What role can they play in encouraging students to have healthy eating and exercise habits?

A. One way, of course, is to include nutrition and exercise in the curriculum—especially in ways that utilize the direct participation kids seem to enjoy so much. For example, teachers could videotape food commercials and then have their students critique the messages. Another possibility would be to have students bring in food labels so the class could analyze them for nutritional content. Or students could talk with cafeteria workers about food planning and nutrition.

School employees may also want to take a look at their own eating and exercise habits to see what messages they're sending out. Remember, educators are important not just as conveyors of knowledge but also as role models. Their attitudes and behaviors can have a strong effect on their students.

A new booklet, *The Relationship Between Nutrition and Learning*, is available for $6.95 from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Ask for stock no. 1472-3-00-D.

Meet:

Edna Loveday

An Education Duet:

Tennessee Teacher of the Year Edna Loveday different worlds, but their Smoky Mountain put them on common

They flock to her like bees to a flower, the 25 children of "Miss Edna's" kindergarten class. "Miss Edna" is Sevier County (Tenn.) Education Association member Edna Loveday. For the last 10 of her 15 years in teaching, she's taught kindergartners at Sevierville Primary.

Loveday's warm, sparkling approach to teaching comes naturally. Her classroom methods have been polished by life with two special needs children she adopted 9 years ago. Loveday admits kinship with students who may be at risk.

When her role as 1989 Tennessee Teacher of the Year brought Loveday to the same podium as Dolly Parton last fall, it meant more than just an encounter with a celebrity. The two have a Sevier County connection. Parton attended Sevier County High School, and Loveday's husband, James, was Parton's physical education teacher.

NEA staff writer Ron Holt recently interviewed Loveday at her school.

Is it hard being a teacher in rural America?
It's not easy being a teacher anywhere. We spend endless hours in preparation and planning. Teaching takes a lot of hard work, patience, strength, perseverance, and overcoming of frustrations. And no matter what we do, salaries are low, and conditions are not always ideal.

But even though there are periods when Americans don't seem to honor teaching, most feel that it is the most vital contribution to the future of our society. So, I continue to have faith that what I do as a teacher can make a definite impact in each child's life.

What do you like best about teaching kindergarten?
The children still have innocence and an eagerness to learn. They're excited about learning; they're honest, and their enthusiasm never seems to dim. And early childhood is the most important period of a child's intellectual development—so it's important for me to give them a good start.

What do children in kindergarten need most?
They need to feel good about themselves. During this time, it's vital for them to build a positive self-concept and an enjoyment of learning. The children also need to learn how to face disappointments, overcome them, and use them as positive learning experiences.

That's one reason I think efforts like Dolly Parton's Buddy Contract program—kids helping each other—will bring real help to at-risk kids.

Is kindergarten changing?
Certainly. It used to be just a play period—more socialization than anything else. That's changed a lot. Today kids are learning in kindergarten what we were teaching in second grade a few years ago. We're teaching children to read words like "mailman"—that's a big word for a five-year-old.

What type of environment do you create for the children?
I want the environment of our class to send them a message that wherever they've come from, this is their home, their special place. I'm a shy person myself, so when shy students come into our room, I know how hard it is for them. I want them to feel they can relax, open up, and be themselves there.

What's the greatest challenge you face?
Meeting every child's needs—they're all so different. I have to take notice of individual needs to help each child become the very best he or she is capable of becoming. I often really have to search within my soul to make sure I'm not overlooking a child—maybe a very quiet one.

How would you describe your style of teaching?
I'm not a real strict teacher. I do expect respect and discipline in the classroom. I think the children in my classroom know how far they can go, and they know that I can correct them and still love them.

The link between health and learning is receiving a lot of attention right now. Does it create any problems for your students?
I think health plays a big part in determining how children react, how much energy they have. And I think children's condition nowadays has a lot to do with all the sitting they do. I'm a very pro-exercise teacher. I think the lack of proper exercise is harmful to children.

What's your idea of a perfect school?
You can have an old one-room schoolhouse and have as much learning going on as you can in a new building. A good school is a school with good teaching.

How can you as a teacher change education—or isn't there a need for change?
We can change and improve education, yes, and there's always a need to improve. As teachers we need to sell ourselves to the public by making the public aware of the consequences of a good educational system—and those that come from one under stress. I think we must join hands with the school districts, the cities, the counties, the state and federal governments, and of course parents and students.

You mentioned Dolly Parton's Buddy Contract program. Where does that kind of initiative fit in?
It makes a big difference. Dolly's concern for our students has brought countywide attention to the dropout problem. Her support is more far-reaching than just a financial reward for graduation. It's very difficult to motivate children, especially during their middle school years, and her project will help do that. Because of Dolly's compassion, commitment, and involvement, our lives as teachers are going to be a little brighter.

'Miss Edna' and Dolly

and singer-actress Dolly Parton work in very roots—and Dolly's stay-in-school program—educational ground.

Dolly Parton—country-western singer, songwriter, motion picture and television actress, entrepreneur—has set her sights on helping kids in her native Sevier County, Tenn., stay in school till they graduate. Parton, who says she identifies with school dropouts because she herself considered leaving school, has set up the Dollywood Foundation, a nonprofit organization, to help stem the area's high dropout rate and improve education in Sevierville and Pigeon Forge, the towns where she attended school.

In the Foundation's Buddy Contract program, seventh and eighth grade students pick a classmate as a buddy and sign a contract certifying that they will not drop out and that they will help each other—and other students—stay in school. Each of the students who graduates from high school will receive $500 from the Dollywood Foundation. NEA Today *staff writer Ron Holt asked Parton about her project.*

Why are you interested in helping local schoolchildren?
Mainly because I can't believe the number of dropouts. I hope that by letting schoolchildren know how I felt when I was their age, I can encourage them to stay in school and graduate.

I wonder where I got the spunk to go to school—I didn't get much encouragement at home, being from a very poor family with 11 brothers and sisters.

What do you hope the Dollywood Foundation will do for local children?
I hope we can provide encouragement for kids to stay in school. I know that money doesn't solve everything. But I think people who are fortunate enough to get out in the world and make something of themselves have a duty to do whatever they can to help others.

And everybody needs a friend, a buddy, someone who will listen—that's why we established a dropout prevention hotline. We try to help solve problems, and we certainly can listen.

What was it like for you growing up in Pigeon Forge?
Well, I grew up on a farm. My daddy never went to school a day in his life—never had the opportunity, because he also was from a very large, poor family, and the kids were needed at home. His lack of education has really limited him, he says. In a lot of ways my daddy happens to be the smartest person I know, and I'm very proud of him, but it makes him very proud that I'm working so hard to help these kids.

What was school like for you?
It was very hard, because when I first started to school, we lived way back in the mountains, and I went to a little one-room school with first through eighth grade. We had one teacher who took care of everybody. We walked to school for a good ways.

Of course, eventually we went on out to larger schools, but it was very hard, too, because we were very poor and our clothes were very ragged. We didn't have a lot of things that other kids did.

I had a lot of homework and also a lot of work to do at home.

There were other people there that I felt were very unkind, and that's all the more reason I'm so involved in trying to help these kids that do have the potential to drop out. They're often very poor kids who are embarrassed and ashamed because they don't have the right clothes to wear and a good home life.

Did you ever consider dropping out of high school?
I most certainly did. I hated every day I went to school.

I know a lot of people say, "You shouldn't say that if you're trying to help kids, because you're a role model." Well, the truth is that the kids that are going to school and are making good grades and enjoy school—they're going to stay in school, they're going to go on anyhow.

It's important that the other kids know that people like me didn't like school, that I thought about dropping out every day. But I didn't do it. I didn't want to stay home all day long and have to do all the babysitting, all the housework, and all the other stuff.

I knew that I could never leave home before I was 18, because my daddy would have come and got me. That's just the way my father is. He's a mountain man, and he cares about his children, and he always said none of us was leaving until we were 18.

I knew I was going to be a singer....I knew I was going to be a star. That's what I believed in my heart. So I felt like at least I'd go to school and learn everything I could.

How important were your teachers in helping you graduate?
I think it's true that there are always certain teachers that every kid remembers...fondly or not so fondly. There are a few teachers who really stand out in my mind who really encouraged me and helped me and were real role models.

The thing is, you just never know who's going to end up being the stars of this world, because nobody would have ever dreamed that I—the little stringy-headed, snotty-nosed, raggedy-assed little kid that I was—would turn out to be anything.

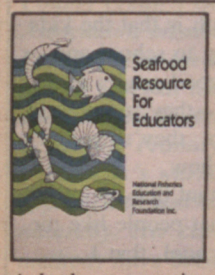
How would you improve schools in Tennessee?
Teachers are such an important part of each child's life, and their influence can last a lifetime. I'd like to see all our schools begin in the early grades to teach children to feel good about themselves—to have self-esteem, to set goals and dreams—to make each student feel special, and to try and somehow let them know that those dreams can come true.

As far as I'm concerned, I think teachers make far too little money. Until that changes, I'll be out there doing everything I can to help.

RESOURCES

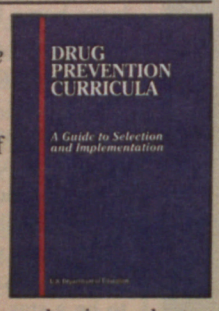
Free or Inexpensive

SCIENCE/HOME ECONOMICS



Seafood Resource for Educators. A teacher's manual on the basics of handling, preparing, and cooking (25 recipes) seafood for a healthy diet. 100 pp. $10. Ask about quantity discounts. National Fisheries Education and Research Foundation, 2000 M St., N.W., #580, Washington, DC 20036.

DRUG EDUCATION

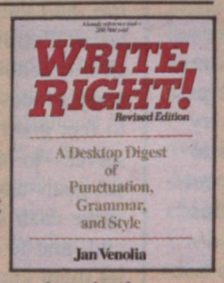


Drug Prevention Curricula: A Guide to Selection and Implementation. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Shows schools what to include when adopting, adapting, or developing substance abuse curriculums. 65 pp. Free. National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Helping Your Child Succeed in School. Association of American Publishers, School Division. The textbook publishers' trade association reaches out to parents with suggestions for ways of coaching kids to school success. 36 pp. $1.50; 10-99 copies, $1.25 each; 100 or more copies, $1 each. Prepaid. N.Y. residents add sales tax. Association of American Publishers, School Division, 220 E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010.

WRITING/GRAMMAR



Write Right! A Desktop Digest of Punctuation, Grammar, and Style. Jan Venolia. A light-hearted guide to the correct use of such useful devices as the semicolon, the apostrophe, the hyphen—plus principles of good writing. 138 pp. Revised, 1988. Paper, $5.95; spiral, $7.95. From booksellers or by mail (add $1.25 p&h) from Ten Speed Press, Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707.

COUNSELING

So You Want To Be in Forestry. American Forestry Association and Society of American Foresters. Describes what today's foresters and forestry technicians do and how they prepare for their professions. 20 pp. 40¢ each (minimum order, 10 copies). American Forestry Association, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, DC 20013.

SKITS AND PROPS

Newspaper Theatre: Creative Play Production for Low Budgets and No Budgets. Alice Morin. Shows how to turn your local paper—or the Sunday *New York Times*, if you're ambitious—into hats, costumes, properties, sets, and scenery for all sorts of classroom performances. 80 pp. $6.95. Fearon Teacher Aids, David S. Lake Publishers, 500 Harbor Blvd., Belmont, CA 94002.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

Student Team Learning: An Overview and Practical Guide. Robert E. Slavin. Second edition. Five approaches to student team learning, especially useful for diverse groups of students. Includes over 30 sample games, scoring sheets, and lesson plans. 79 pp. Stock No. 1836-2-00-D. $9.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

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RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

Learning in America—*PBS, weekly starting Monday, March 27, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Roger Mudd hosts a five-part series on the state of American education.

Wings over the World—*Arts and Entertainment Network, weekly starting Wednesday, April 5, 9-10 p.m. ET; rebroadcasts start Sunday, April 9, 6-7 p.m. ET.* A 13-part series about the pioneers of flight, featuring film clips and comments by former aviators.

America in the Age of AIDS—*PBS, Wednesday, April 5, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Documentary examining how individuals and society as a whole are responding to the AIDS epidemic.

National Geographic Special—*PBS, Wednesday, April 12, 8-9 p.m. ET:* "Serengeti Diary." Wildlife photographer Hugo van Lawick introduces viewers to the Serengeti region of Tanzania. For a free resource guide to this season's Specials, write to National Geographic Specials, c/o Chevron, 742 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710.

America Remembers JFK—*CBN, Saturday, April 15, 8-10 p.m. ET.* Old newsreels, television tapes, and personal interviews show the ways in which former President John F. Kennedy served his country. Hal Holbrook narrates.

The Golden Honeymoon—*Bravo Cable Network, Sunday, April 16, 5-6 p.m. ET; rebroadcast Monday, April 24, 9:30-10:30 p.m. ET.* Ring Lardner's short story about a couple who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary when they run into the wife's former fiance.

Ask Washington—*Learning Channel, Monday-Friday, 9-10 a.m. ET, starting April 17. April 17-21:* "Education Week." Education reform, from grassroots to Washington, D.C. Viewers can call in to speak with national experts.

The Urban War on Drugs: A Report from the Front—*Learning Channel, Wednesday, April 19, 9-9:30 p.m.* A special report on how cities are implementing innovative programs to fight drug abuse.

Eleanor Roosevelt: The First Lady of the World—*Arts and Entertainment Network, Sunday, April 30, 8-9 p.m. ET.* The life story of the civil rights activist, feminist, and international human rights advocate.

Around the World in 80 Days—*NBC-TV, sometime in April; check local listings for dates and times.* A three-part, six-hour miniseries based on the Jules Verne classic. NBC has distributed a poster/study guide to all high schools. For more information, contact your local NBC affiliate.

Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story—*HBO, sometime in April; check local listings for dates and times.* True story about a renowned humanitarian and relentless pursuer of Nazi war criminals. Ben Kingsley (pictured below) stars.

National Public Radio Playhouse — *National Public Radio, sometime in April; check local listings for dates and times*: "Beckett Festival of Radio Plays." Five-part series presenting dramas written for radio by Irish expatriate Samuel Beckett, who began making theater history with his first play, *Waiting for Godot*, written in 1952.

Sesame Street 20th Anniversary Special—*NBC-TV, sometime in April; check local listings for dates and times.* A special presentation hosted by Bill Cosby and produced by Muppets creator Jim Henson.

Note: These listings are based on information available at the time NEA Today *went to press.*

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FROM THE PLAYING FIELD...

CHAMP

EVELYN ASHFORD & SHARON HEDRICK
Olympic Sprinter & Wheelchair Olympian

"Turn up the music," shouted one student to another, who did an about-face and raced back to adjust the volume on the old record player. "Here they come!"

To the blaring accompaniment of the familiar *Chariots of Fire* theme song, Takoma Intermediate School students, teachers, and staff rolled out the red carpet last February for Olympic track stars Evelyn Ashford and Sharon Hedrick.

It was the third annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day, and the two athletes—both deeply committed to sports, education, and equal opportunity—visited the Maryland school to talk to students.

"At nine, I had a spinal cord injury that paralyzed my legs," Hedrick, gold medalist and world record holder in the 800-meter women's wheelchair track event, told the 500 spellbound seventh and eighth graders.

"I got involved in sports when I was 19—not before then, primarily because I didn't know there was a thing called wheelchair sports."

Once Hedrick found out, it was hard to stop her. She swam, played basketball, and ran track—and she found out she was fast.

Being involved in sports "taught me many, many things," Hedrick said. "It taught me how to work hard for something that you want, how to set a goal and work toward it, reach it, and then set another goal. It taught me there aren't any shortcuts in life."

Ashford, a member of the 1976, '84, and '88 Olympic teams and holder of three gold medals in track, recalled that she'd raced boys in the schoolyard until the passage of Title IX in 1972. "After that, they had to let me run on the boys' track team," Ashford said. Needless to say, she attracted attention.

Her message to students: "Think of something you like to do that seems maybe impossible and try it, because everything is possible. It really is."

"I'm 31 years old now, and I'm at a crossroads in my career," she continued. "They're telling me I'm too old, but I'm going to make the [Olympic] team in four years to go to Barcelona. I'm going to do that for my three-year-old daughter. She's a Black girl growing up in America facing the impossible, and I'm going to do it for her—to show her the impossible can be done."

Hedrick, the first woman in a wheelchair to compete in the Boston Marathon, is living proof of that assertion. Her advice to students: "You shouldn't place limitations on yourself. There are a lot of people out there who want to do that for you. You don't have to do it for yourself."

JOHN LUCAS
Pro Basketball Player

"People say to kids, 'just say no.' But I believe kids have to know what they're saying no to and why. They need to be honest with themselves and realize they can face life without medicating themselves in order to cope," says John Lucas.

John Lucas speaks from experience. Despite a successful career playing for the Milwaukee Bucks, Houston Rockets, Washington Bullets, and now the Seattle Supersonics, Lucas battled a dependency on drugs and alcohol—and won. Now, he says, "I don't want anyone else to experience what I have."

Lucas visits schools across the country representing STAND—Students Taking Action, Not Drugs. "I have to live day by day now, and I tell kids that."

The organization "is about kids talking about their fears and realizing they're not alone," says Lucas.

Teaching is nothing new to Lucas. He has a master's degree in education, his sister works in NEA Research, his father, is an honorary member of NEA's Board of Directors, and his mother is a retired principal.

"Being an athlete gave me an arena in which to help these kids," Lucas says, "to show them the impact drugs and alcohol have on a family and how important it is to say 'no.'"

Peter Read Miller/Sports Illustrated

GREG LOUGANIS
Olympic Diver

"When I was growing up," recalls diving legend Greg Louganis, "I didn't feel very good about myself."

Report cards described him as lazy, unmotivated—an underachiever. "I did poorly in any subject that required a lot of reading," Louganis says. "I went through school feeling like a failure." Finally, working through a college freshman vocabulary list, "I looked up *dyslexia* and figured out I had it."

Despite all subsequent successes, the memory of his own early failure keeps Louganis trying to boost students' self-esteem. Besides giving critical messages about diving safety, "I tell kids they can start feeling good about themselves," says Louganis. "Rather than get into drugs and alcohol, I tell them to stick with education. It's going to get them everything they desire—or at least teach them how to get it."

Three years ago, Louganis was deeply moved by AIDS victim Ryan White's efforts to get an education in an Indiana town afraid of AIDS.

"It's so amazing for a 14-year-old to try to fight his way back into the school system," Louganis notes. "At his age I would have just given up."

Louganis stepped in to do what he could. "The diving championships were in Indianapolis that year," he says, "so I got in touch with Ryan and invited him to be my guest. I wanted to show that I wasn't afraid of this young man. I wanted to set an example for the people of Kokomo."

Ryan came to the meet, got a guided tour of the 10-meter diving platform, and wore Louganis' medal home. That was the beginning of a special friendship between Louganis and the White family.

"Not many people know," Louganis notes proudly, "that Ryan has a sister, Jeannie, who's an excellent roller skater."

What does it take to be a winner? These athletes know—and are taking time out to teach kids Lesson #1: Go For It. As superstar quarterback Doug Williams says, "Horizons are where you place them."

Page One/Bill Burke

...TO THE CLASSROOM

Ronald Modra/Sports Illustrated

Sports stars (pictured clockwise, from lower left) are Sharon Hedrick, Evelyn Ashford, Greg Louganis, and Howie Long.

DOUG WILLIAMS
Pro Football Player

The 1987-88 football season marked a high point in the career of Doug Williams of the Washington Redskins. The first Black quarterback of a Super Bowl team, he handled the press with class and the game with apparent ease. When the parties, the parade, and the publicity were over, Williams recalled his youth.

"At any point during my life, I could have taken a wrong turn," he writes. "I'm convinced that a strong family, positive role models, and support programs kept me on the right track. A team of very special people helped me learn that horizons are where you place them."

To create "a very special team" for Washington's youth, Williams and his wife, Lisa, created the Doug Williams Foundation last April.

The foundation provides college scholarships, motivational sports programs, anti-dropout and anti-drug programs, and leadership and life skills training for Washington-area kids. Each Tuesday during football season, Williams visits schools.

The kids at each school hang on his every word. "But, you don't have to be an athlete to be a role model," Williams stresses. "You can be a brother, a father, a neighbor, a businessman, a teacher. The main thing is to be a leader."

ZINA GARRISON
Pro Tennis Player

Despite the pressure of a match against Steffi Graf—number one female tennis player in the world—Zina Garrison took a break from the Virginia Slims Tournament to lead a tennis clinic at Washington, D.C.'s Kelly Miller Jr. High.

One of the growing number of Black players at the top of a sport still dominated by whites, Garrison often hosts clinics and motivational talks for city kids. "Many of these kids are fine athletes, but they're automatically rushed into basketball or football. I think some could develop into top tennis players if they start early," she says.

"Growing up in Houston, public schools and public parks were all I knew. I didn't have the option of private schools or private tennis lessons."

What Garrison did have was the determination to spend endless hours working through the rigorous drills of coach John Wilkerson.

The payoff? Number nine ranking in the world, a gold medal in doubles and bronze medal in singles in the 1988 Olympic games, and countless tournament victories.

"Tennis has been good to me," says Garrison as she autographs the tennis balls and programs held by Kelly Miller students. "I feel I owe the sport something, so I'd like to motivate young athletes to get involved."

HOWIE LONG
Pro Football Player

Nicknamed "Caveman," Howie Long is one of the best—and the meanest—defensive linemen in all of football. He's 6'5" tall, 275 pounds, and has a reputation for being bad—very baaaddd—on the field.

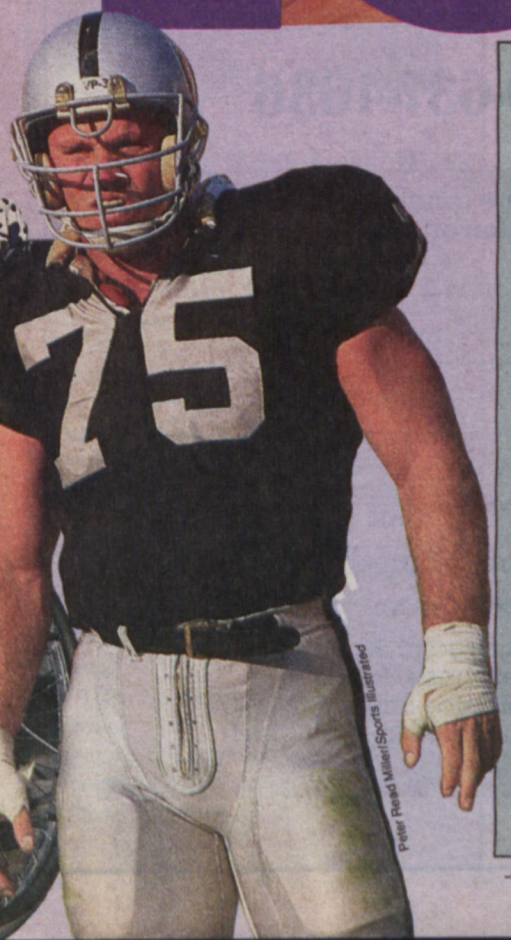
Long takes pride in intimidating his opponents, but does he scare kids? "Nah," he jokes. "Kids and dogs—they can sense when someone is good."

Long is a kids' man. He was a Charlestown, Mass., street kid himself, shuttled between relatives, always behind in school. Now the father of two, Long feels a special kinship with children, "'cause," he teases, "I've never been much of an adult myself."

Beyond kinship, however, Long feels an adult responsibility to kids—and shows it. He's national chair of Athletes and Entertainers for Kids, a group of celebrities who pitch in to educate schoolchildren and boost the spirits of hospitalized kids. Besides representing the group at events and fundraisers, Long organizes miniature golf tournaments for sick children and makes a lot of hospital visits himself.

"'It gives me an opportunity to step in as a professional athlete and in some way affect a child for the rest of his or her life. I think that's a pretty amazing thing when you sit down and think about it.

"What I would have given," says the former tough teen, "if someone had done that for me when I was a kid!"


Peter Read Miller/Sports Illustrated

Making Connections

Athletes and Entertainers for Kids. Chaired by pro football player Howie Long, this program offers stars' time as part of AIDS and drug education programs and programs for hospitalized and needy children. The address is 8961 Sunset Blvd., 2nd floor, Los Angeles, CA 90069, 213-276-KIDS.

Doug Williams Foundation. (See above.) The address is 1511 K St., N.W., Suite 733, Washington, DC 20005, 202-347-DOUG.

Get Smart, Don't Start. Professional athletes are a part of these drug education programs for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Available materials include videotape and teachers' guide. Write Paul Grant, 484 Main St., Hampden, MA 01036, 413-566-5574.

Pros for Kids. Headed by former pro football player Delvin Williams, Pros for Kids offers a drug prevention curriculum for high school and junior high school athletes, a speakers bureau, and a counseling program and camp program for teenagers. Write Delvin Williams, 1011 Cadillac Way, Suite C, Burlingame, CA 94010, 415-343-8279.

STAND (Students Taking Action Not Drugs). (See above.) For guidelines on setting up chapters, write STAND, P.O. Box 300386, Houston, TX 77230-0386, 713-799-8336.

Triumph/USAA (United States Athletes Association). Established by former pro football player Carl Eller, USAA's Triumph Life Center maintains a speakers bureau, drug education program and film, recovery program, and hotline. Write USAA, 555 Simpson St., St. Paul, MN 55104, 612-642-9363, HOTLINE 1-800-342-8722.

—By Anita Merina and Stefanie Weiss

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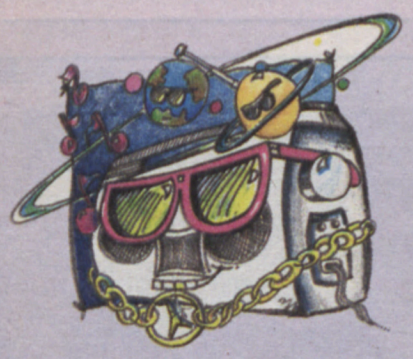


Doing the Planet Rap

"The rap is an easy teaching tool for all elementary teachers," says Linda Lash, a fifth grade teacher at Pennsylvania's Curwensville Elementary School. Lash uses a rap song she wrote to teach students the names of planets.

"Most students have trouble learning the planets in their proper order," she explains. "But my students learned the Planet Rap—and knew the planets in order—after going through the song a couple of times."

Lash notes several ways to teach the rap: for example, teach it all at once and repeat it over and over until the students have learned all the planets, or teach one section at a time.

Rap music can be used to help students learn just about any list. "My students really enjoy rapping and don't think about the actual learning that's taking place," says Lash.

Fake Dig, Real Lesson

Chesapeake, Va., teacher Sandra Midkiff wants her learning disabled students to recognize that an archaeological dig is often the key to a region's past. To prove the point, Midkiff has created a challenge for the Deep Creek Jr. High School class.

First, the class learns the different methods of surveying, digging, chronology dating, and identifying and interpreting artifacts. The students then embark on their own dig at a site where Midkiff has buried three layers of artifacts, representing a Powhatan Indian tribe, an early Jamestown-type settlement, and a Civil War-era plantation.

"These students are excited and learning a lot," says Midkiff. "Using the tools of an archaeologist, they recreate together the politics, art, and culture of these periods."

Rejuvenating by Redecorating

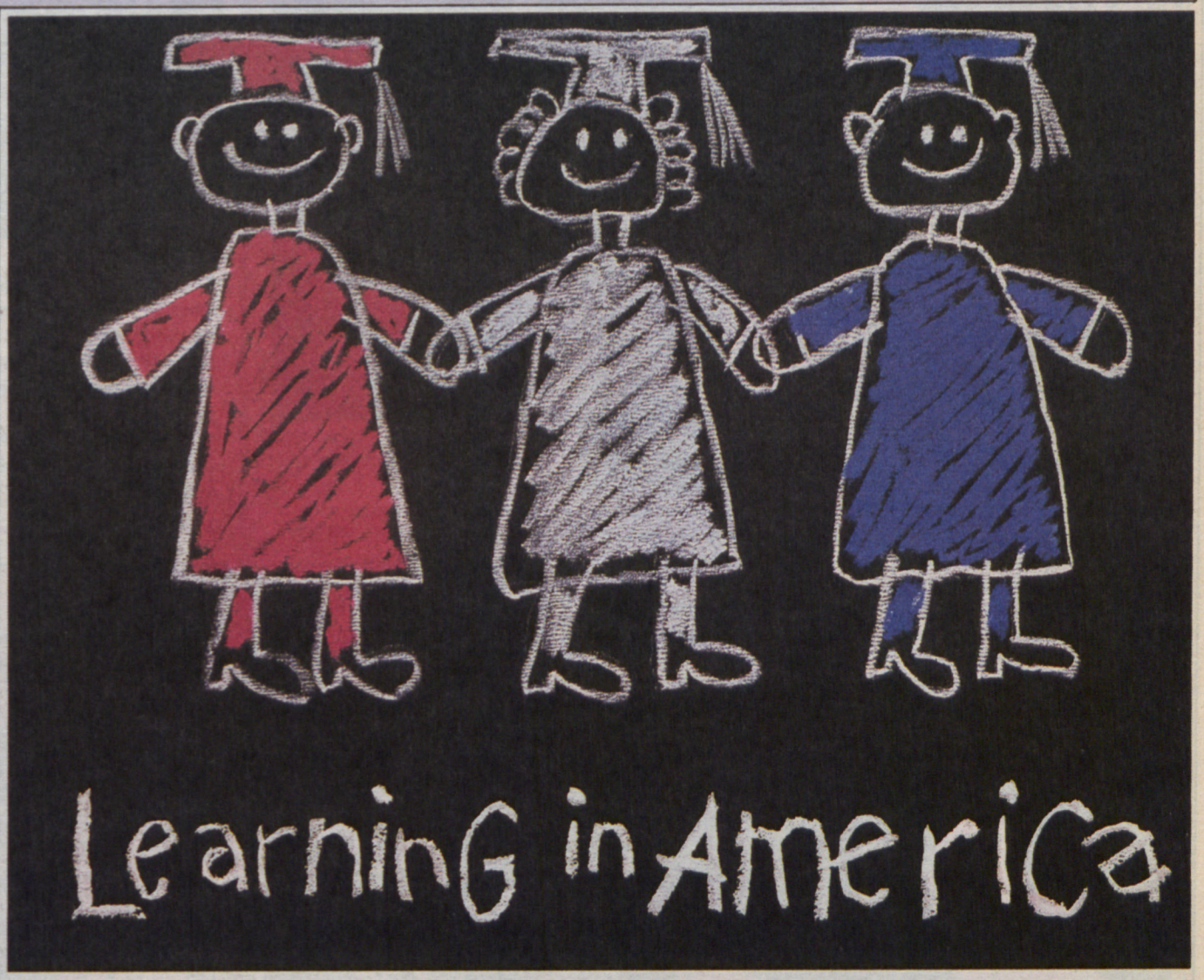
Lovelock, Nev., home economics teacher Karen O'Larey has given her students an assignment and her fellow teachers a boost. O'Larey won a "Good Ideas" award from the Nevada State Education Association for her project to redecorate the teachers' room. O'Larey's interior design class will plan, design, and work on the project. O'Larey's "Good Ideas" grant money will help purchase plants, pictures, furniture, and a used typewriter for the newly decorated room.

Historic Puppets

Students in Mitzi Dorton Van Schyndel's special education class at Patrick Henry High School in Glade Spring, Va., are making a special group of puppets this year.

The puppets—each handsewn by one of Van Schyndel's students—represent such figures as the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, and Rosa Parks. They will provide the characters for puppet shows dramatizing the Black experience in American history and the civil rights movement.

"By making the puppets and planning the shows, the students are learning about an important period in our nation's history and celebrating the work of national heroes," says Van Schyndel. She and her students plan to present the puppet shows to elementary special education classes..



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Roger Mudd is the host of this MacNeil/Lehrer Productions-WETA, Washington, D.C., Coproduction for P.B.S.

Five Mondays starting March 27 at 9PM (EST) on P.B.S. Television.

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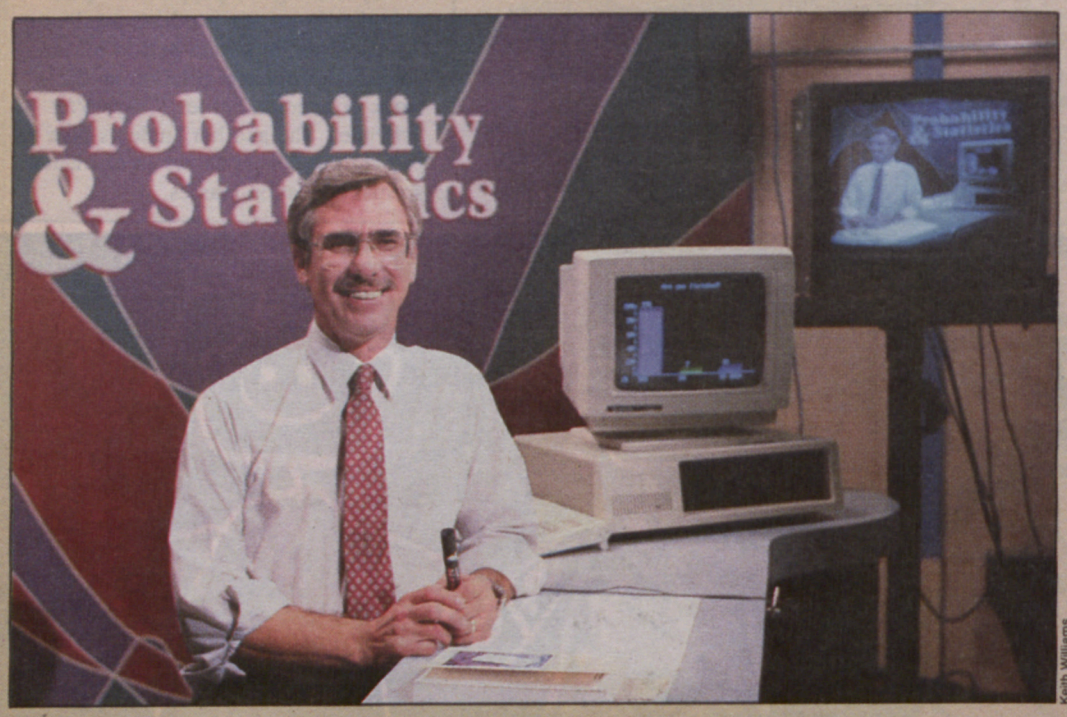


Keith Williams

When Kentucky teacher **Tom Graviss** speaks, 250 students across the country tune in. Graviss teaches probability and statistics by satellite, part of an innovative arrangement between the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Educational Television.

Graviss' course reaches students in 70 rural schools and 18 states. Classes range from two to 12 students who communicate with Graviss through electronic key pads linked to the station via telephone lines.

"Even though I can't see them, I'm very much in touch with my students," says Graviss. "The key pad forces them to interact, and I know immediately whether they understand."

To establish rapport with his students, Graviss often wears the sweat shirt or T-shirt of a selected school and features photos of its students during the program.

In return, students send Graviss school mementos and comical photos of themselves.

Debbie Haught and the other 14 Arizona women who belong to the *Quadrille de Mujeres* put life and limb at risk every time they gallop into a rodeo arena.

The *Mujeres* (Spanish for *women*) do a four-and-a-half-minute precision riding act at breakneck speed. Haught, a home economics teacher at Arizona's Casa Grande High School, is the group's drill director.

A bit like Vienna's performing Lipizzaner horses? Haught says no: "The Lipizzaners are slow; we're

Todd Panagopoulos

Vice President Dan Quayle was about to sneak out the back door at an inaugural reception last January when he saw a man running toward his secret service staff, screaming wildly, "Mr. Vice President, Mr. Vice President!"

Quayle paused just long enough for out-of-breath Illinois special education teacher **Larry Baran** to blurt out a very important message: "My special education students at Homewood Flossmoor High School made all the floral arrangements for this reception!"

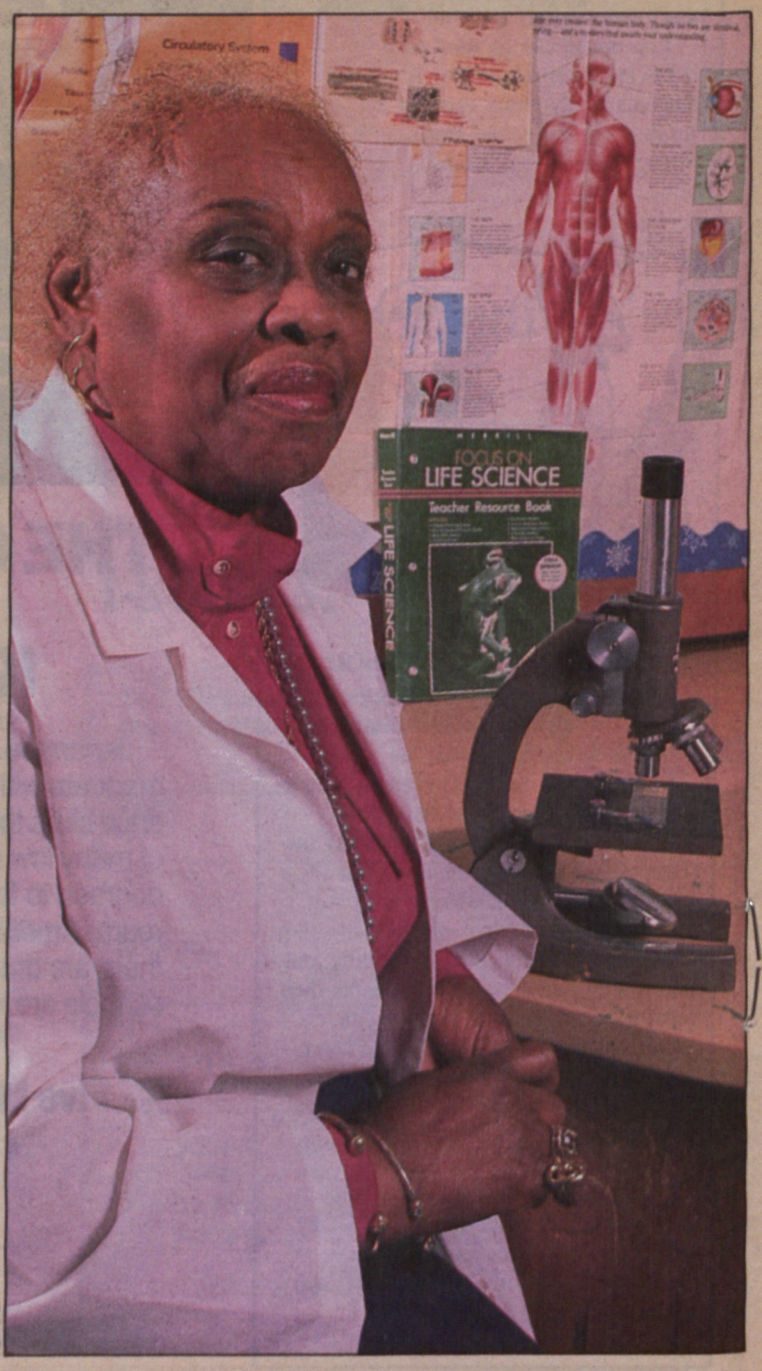
The Vice President, according to Baran, "just melted. He turned to his press secretary and said, 'Do you understand? Special education students did this for me.' I'll never forget that moment."

How did all this come about? Baran, a sometime florist who teaches his students floral arranging as part of their educational and vocational training, "just picked up the phone one day and called the White House."

A few weeks—and 50 phone calls—later, Baran's special ed kids were filling swans and lanterns with silk floral clusters, painting gazebos, and dressing teddy bears as First Family members in inaugural scenes.

Quayle was so impressed with the display he told Baran he'd visit Homewood Flossmoor to thank the students personally.

Quayle watchers, stay tuned!



Ken Urbi

Ken Akers

Ken Akers

more flash and dash.

"Our audience has to catch their breath and be scared," Haught continues. "That's what we're hired for." The *Mujeres* were the first drill act to belong to the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

The *Mujeres* have other lines of work—they variously manage farms, sell stocks, run shops—in addition to teaching school. Their average age is almost 40—the oldest is 60.

Why risk broken femurs and collarbones (which two members have incurred in the group's 24-year history)?

"It's not fun unless there's danger involved," Haught says. "I like the roar of the crowd and the knowledge that you have to get through the routine, but that something might happen—a horse might spook—and you'd have to think fast."

Clydia Chan—graduate student, adviser of potential college students—has begun getting yet another perspective on higher education this year. The 34-year classroom veteran, now teaching science and health at Plainview Middle School, was appointed by New York Governor Mario Cuomo to a five-year term on the College Council of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Old Westbury. SUNY's Councils advise the colleges on community matters and advocate for the colleges to the community.

A building representative of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Congress of Teachers, Chan serves with eight other Council members, mostly administrators.

The college student's viewpoint isn't new to Chan. Now completing a doctorate in educational administration, she's attended Bank Street College of Education; Hofstra University; Manhattan College; North Adams State Teachers College; Teachers College, Columbia University; and Wells College.

Until recently Chan spent two evenings a week encouraging science students to go on—through school and into college.

As for her own health classes, "I have fifth graders who are already motivated to go into health professions," says Chan. "They call my room the pre-med room."

Morrow (Ga.) High School teacher **Pat Siefferman** (left) is spending much of her spare time these days making a big splash on behalf of homeless people.

Siefferman, a Clayton County Education Association member, helped create SPLASH (Students Promoting Love And Support for the Homeless) to reduce the anguish of homeless families—especially children.

A health occupations teacher, Siefferman notes that many of her students were shocked to learn that Clayton County, just outside Atlanta, had 1,200 homeless people.

"At first I was reluctant to get involved—it's an emotional issue that takes a lot of time," Siefferman says. Under her guidance, students have conducted a broad public education program that includes placing stories about the homeless in local and regional newspapers, getting coverage on local television news and radio programs, and prompting stations to air public service announcements.

After nearly a year of putting in long hours on the SPLASH project, the club hopes it will soon reach some of its goals. Major aims are to create more awareness in the community and to get the project adopted by outside groups.

Witley Court, the old home of the Earls of Dudley near Stourport, Worcestershire, England, is a long way from the small towns that dot the wooded western shores of Lake Michigan. But Manistee (Mich.) High School art teacher **Ken Cooper** is bridging the distance—with his art.

Cooper's work—which includes watercolors of abandoned farmhouses and country mansions around Manistee—was discovered by an English art gallery director whom a friend brought to Cooper's house.

After organizing a successful exhibition of Cooper's "Michigan Portfolio" at the Dudley Museum and Gallery in England, the gallery director commissioned Cooper to paint an English landmark—Witley Court.

Cooper is working on a series of paintings of the 300-year-old edifice—which Cooper calls a "palace with an intriguing history"—to be shown at the Dudley Gallery next winter.

Neither fame nor funding has gone to Cooper's head. "I'm the high school art teacher, and that's what I want to be," the 18-year teaching veteran says definitively. "If I got $10 million tomorrow, I'd still get up at 5 o'clock—as I did this morning—paint for an hour, then go to school to teach."

Ron Muszynski

RESEARCH CLUES

Another Boost for Cooperative Learning

By Robert McNergney and Martin Haberman

Cooperative learning? "Yes, of course," you say, "my students work together on all kinds of things." But are students who're grouped together necessarily cooperating or learning from the experience?

The cooperative learning movement boasts a growing set of tested approaches that boost teachers' chances for making "cooperation" truly cooperative and beneficial for students.

Shlomo Sharan of Tel Aviv University describes one very promising approach, called Group Investigation.

1. Students identify subtopics within

a broader topic for group study. The teacher divides the class into small groups with each choosing a subtopic to work on.

2. Once in groups, students identify still smaller subtopics to work on as individuals or in pairs.

3. Students make and carry out plans for gathering information and exchanging it. They discuss ideas and problems, analyze their information—then decide how to combine their work into a single product.

4. Students prepare a group report and decide how to present it to the whole class—without giving a lecture. Instead, they use skits, demonstrations, experiments, exhibitions, quiz shows—any method that will elicit the active involvement of the whole class.

5. Groups present their report to the whole class, seeking maximum involvement of class members.

6. The students evaluate the presentations of their own and other groups, using a variety of methods and points of view.

What happens when classrooms function in this manner? Professor Sharan compared 10 sixth-grade classes taught with the Group Investigation method and 7 sixth-grade classes taught by traditional whole-class methods. Students in classes using Group Investigation got higher scores in arithmetic and reading comprehension than did students in classes that worked as a whole.

Using a creative measure of student motivation—a combination of students' willingness to stay in class instead of going to recess, teachers' perceptions of student involvement while in class, and estimates of how much effort students put into homework—Sharan found that Group Investigation affected students more positively than did the whole-class method. He speculates that Group Investigation may have a positive influence on social relations in the class, which may, in turn, improve motivation and achievement.

For further information, see articles written or coauthored by Shlomo Sharan in two forthcoming books: *Children Helping Children*, edited by Hugh Foot and others (Wiley, 1989) and *Cooperative Learning: Theory and Research* (Praeger, 1989).

Robert McNergney is director of the Commonwealth Center for the Education of Teachers, University of Virginia and James Madison University, Charlottesville, VA 22903. Martin Haberman is a professor at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201. They prepared this column for NEA Today *with the cooperation of the American Educational Research Association.*

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Barbara Lewis and students with the barrels they later got removed.

CLEAN UP FOR THE FUTURE

The greenhouse effect, toxic waste, contaminated beaches—no environmental woe's too big for kids to tackle. Students' efforts get results from companies and legislators—and give them experience in taking charge of their world.

Kids are taking a critical look at the world around them. They're seeing conditions they want changed. And with suggestions, reminders, and—above all—questions from committed and imaginative teachers, they're making those changes happen.

Along the way, they're learning research, calculation, and communications skills and applying them in science and social studies. Even more, they're learning how the world works, and about their own abilities.

Nick Byrne's fifth graders in Closter, N.J., were talking about the Bill of Rights, when one of them said, "How can we use our right to free expression?"

Choose a topic, Byrne suggested, and write the newspapers about it. Pollution was in the news a lot: they chose that. Then they did some research and started writing.

That was in the fall of 1987, and since then Tenakill School's Kids Against Pollution (K.A.P.)—as they soon started calling themselves—have never looked back.

K.A.P. has also contacted one school in each New Jersey county, asking its students to join and to contact other schools. Every two months, K.A.P. organizes a letter-writing campaign: K.A.P. picks the recipients, members pick their own topics. The first campaign, directed to U.S. Sen. Bill Bradley and New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, mobilized more than 2,000 letters.

K.A.P.'s motto is "Save the Earth—Not Just for Us But for Future Generations." Byrne's students advocate a ban on ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons (in this case the international community is catching up with them). They oppose mass incineration and favor recycling, composting, and reduction of sources of pollution—for example, by substituting gasohol for fossil fuels.

The original K.A.P. founders, sixth graders now, still meet. Byrne's present class has kept up the momentum, lobbying the school board for strong recycling policies. And K.A.P. now has chapters, ranging from fourth through eighth grades, in 51 school districts in 26 states.

K.A.P. kids mobilize not only data and logic, but political muscle. "We're only fifth graders," said founding member Jaime Kolacia last year, "but someday we'll be voting for the people who will help us stop pollution." Until then, as Jaime's classmate Cathy Bell wrote to a newspaper, "We cannot vote yet. But our parents can. And do."

As for the Bill of Rights, "I wanted them to learn," says Byrne, "that individuals can have an impact on the world, provided they act in a unified manner." The lesson succeeded.

Students' environmental concerns handed Salt Lake City's Barbara Lewis her "very best moment as a teacher." When a student flushed with a local environmental success asked, "Why don't we clean up the whole state?" says Lewis, "I didn't laugh.

"Often the best thing—and the hardest—for us to do as teachers," she continues, "is to not tell the students what we know, including what we know can't be done."

By the time they took on the state, Lewis' gifted and talented classes at Jackson Elementary School already knew a lot about pollution. Studying ground water had made them wonder whether a nearby yard holding 40,000 old barrels might be contaminated with toxic waste.

They called the Environmental Protection Agency's toll-free number, EPA's Denver office sent agents to collect samples (see photo), and nine months later the answer came back. The soil contained heavy metals and toxic chemicals believed to cause brain and nerve damage and birth defects.

And kids from Jackson had been slipping through holes in the fence to play around those barrels. Lewis' fourth, fifth, and sixth graders thought about who might help get the hazard removed.

The kids called the health department, the mayor's office, and the owner of the property. The damage was stopped when the owner leased the yard to a different company, which removed all the barrels—some of which had been there since World War II—and put up a new fence.

That's when Lewis' class decided that Utah, with 150 other suspected hazardous waste sites, needed a Superfund. They set right out to start it off, with a white elephant sale that raised $468.22. The 550 fundraising letters they wrote brought in $2,192. Triumphantly, they brought this start-up grant to the state—only to find the state couldn't accept it: it needed legal authorization.

How does a bill become a law? Barbara Lewis' students know. They found sponsors, lobbied, and printed leaflets. H.B. 199, State Contributory Superfund, passed both houses of the legislature unanimously. Last month lawmakers voted to put $3 million of public money into a new fund, also keeping students' voluntary fund.

Easy victories? Kid stuff?

Not at all—a corporation as far away as Michigan has locked horns with Byrne's class in New Jersey, and during the barrel-yard dispute, Lewis was threatened with a personal lawsuit unless she called off her kids.

And beyond the realities of power and politics, for everyday use, "The kids have learned to make life happen," says Lewis, "instead of letting life happen to them."

—Jane Power

New Jersey teacher Nick Byrne reviews progress of anti-pollution effort.

New Jersey Newsphoto

Join in the Celebration

On May 6, K.A.P. will observe Environmental Rights Day, and you're invited to celebrate with them. For a kit of articles about pollution, useful materials, and addresses of environmental groups, send $3 for expenses to K.A.P., Tenakill School, 275 High Street, Closter, NJ 07624.

Other helpful environmental groups:

The Cousteau Society, 930 W. 21st St., Norfolk, VA 23517/ 804-627-1144.

Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Affairs (9-107), Washington, DC 20460. 202-382-2080 (publications), 800-424-9346.

Friends of the Earth, 530 7th St., S.E., Washington, DC 20003. 202-543-4312.

Greenpeace International, 1436 U St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009. 202-462-1177.

National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-2266. 202-797-6800.

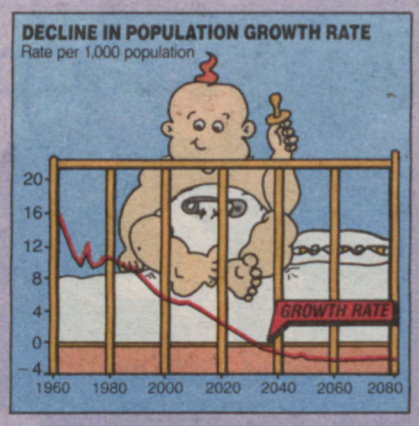
DATA BANK

U.S. Population To Drop As Baby Boomers Age

In its first update of population projections since 1983, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that as baby boomers age, America's population will grow more and more slowly, then start to decline.

Currently estimated at 247 million, the population is expected to grow to nearly 302 million by 2038 before starting to shrink.

Source: Census Bureau

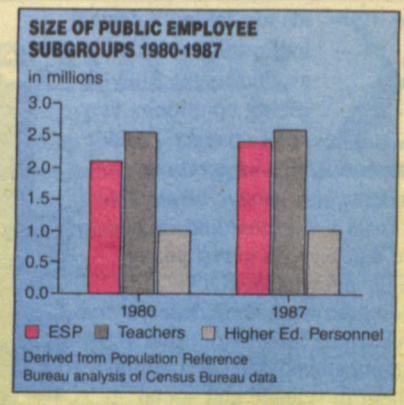


ESP Show Growth Spurt

Between 1980 and 1987, the number of educational support personnel rose 13 percent, from 2.1 to 2.4 million.

That's a much greater increase than in other education employee subgroups. The number of teachers grew from 2.5 to 2.6 million; of higher education personnel from 1.02 to 1.03 million. ESP numbers increased most dramatically in the South—from 31 percent in 1980 to 39 percent in 1987.

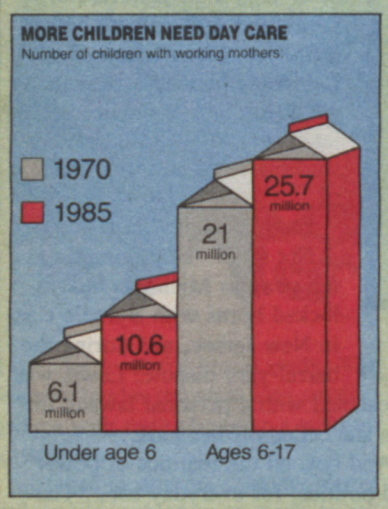
Source: NEA Research/Population Reference Bureau



More Kids Need Day Care

The massive increase in the number of mothers working outside the home is one of the 20th century's most dramatic trends. Six out of 10 American women with children under the age of six—and over half of mothers with children less than a year old—are now in the paid workforce.

Source: Children's Defense Fund



Dropouts Lose Out When It Comes to Jobs

More than half of high school graduates have full-time jobs, while only one-third of high school dropouts do.

Dropouts cost society money, too; estimates range from $60 billion to $228 billion per year in lost tax revenues and in social service, unemployment, and crime-related expenses.

Source: Children's Defense Fund

Franklin: a part-time job with big-time pay.

Glorene and Chad Weisser with daughter Katherine at home in Foley, Minnesota.

When Glorene Weisser and husband, Chad, started a family, she left a $30,000-a-year management job to spend time at home. But with an extra mouth to feed and a lot of extra energy, she was soon looking for a part-time job.

"Just a couple of years ago I purchased a Franklin plan from my former P.E. teacher and track coach. That person first shared this opportunity with me."

After hearing how a teacher was earning a lot of extra money working only summer months selling Franklin plans, Glorene figured she ought to do pretty well year-round.

Working at her own pace, on her own schedule, Glorene expects her income to grow 100% this year. Plus, the Weissers just bought a home on 80 acres (they like to cross country ski). But most of all, it's the time with her daughter that Glorene treasures most.

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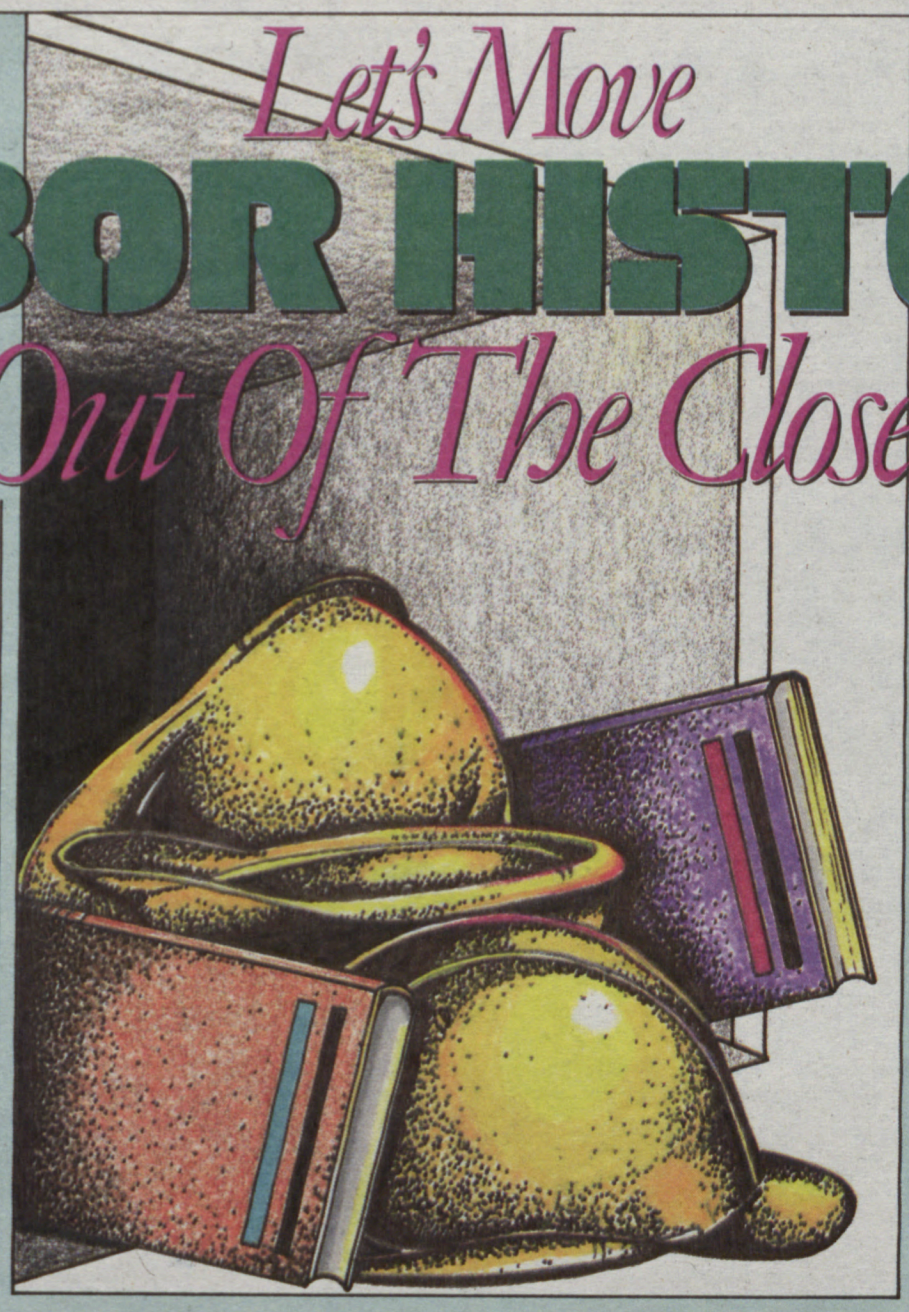
SOUNDING BOARD

Let's Move LABOR HISTORY Out Of The Closet

By Bill Bigelow



A vice-principal walking into my classroom might think I'm falling down on the job: I'm not lecturing, not leading a discussion, not circulating among students, not even showing a film. I'm sitting in the corner—just watching.

Students are seated in a circle, one moment arguing about whether their commissaries should feed strikebreakers, the next about whether they should obey the police order to stop picketing. ("Look, if we don't stop picketing, we'll just be giving the police an excuse to use violence."

"But it's not a law that we made, so we don't have to obey it!")

The students are in the midst of a role-play of the 1912 Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike—one of the most interesting labor struggles in U.S. history. If it works, students learn more than facts about history. They learn that ordinary people *can* make change—that thousands of workers speaking dozens of languages, a large proportion of them women and teenagers, overcame differences, stuck together, and won.

One of my commitments as a first-year teacher in 1978 was to use history to show my students that they could make a difference. I joined with a group of teachers, college professors, and labor educators to create lessons on labor history. Although our group was short-lived, two of us continued to write and test curriculum, and have recently published the results (see below).

Cynicism has been the hallmark of recent student generations. Underpinning this attitude, often, is the conviction that people are basically selfish: when the crunch comes, it's "look out for No. 1." Much of our labor curriculum, including the lesson on the Lawrence strike, challenges students to think more deeply about the idea of self-interest.

That's what an activity that we developed called the "Organic Goodie Simulation" is designed to do. This activity produced one of my most memorable teaching experiences.

In the lesson, I'm the owner of a factory that produces "organic goodies." Mine is the only goodie factory in our classroom-country, and, lucky for me, goodies are the only means of sustenance. Half the class I hire as workers; the other half remains unemployed, barely surviving on welfare-goodies, hoping a worker will quit or be fired.

My goal as owner is to maximize profits, and I try to do that the easiest way, driving down wages by pitting workers and the unemployed against one another. In effect, I auction off jobs to the lowest bidder.

This particular year, my money-making zeal finally got the best of me. When I went too far, students organized a union to demand higher wages and jobs for everyone. Later they went on strike, and a group of students picked me up, carried me across the room, deposited me in the corner, put a squirt gun to my head, and threatened to "kill" me if I said another word. The strike and "assault" on the owner provided a rich text for later reflection about the causes of worker organization: does true self-interest lie in getting someone else's job, or in banding together for the common good?

To read most U.S. history text-books, you'd think the only people who ever did anything of value in the past were the big shots: presidents, generals, Carnegies, Rockefellers. What scant labor history is covered follows the same pattern, extolling leaders like Samuel Gompers and John L. Lewis. It usually skims over the experiences or accomplishments of ordinary workers.

The effect, intentional or not, is to teach students—especially students from working-class families—self-contempt: ordinary people never did anything worth writing about; if you want something done, look to the big guys, look to those in charge.

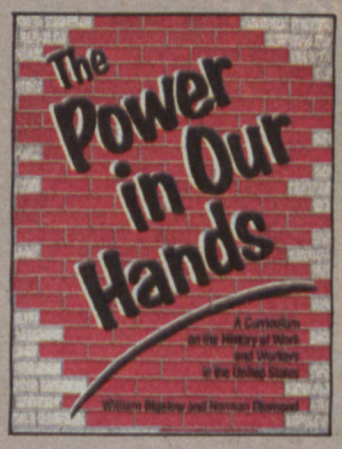
We use Bertolt Brecht's poem, "A Worker Reads History" ("Philip of Spain wept as his fleet was sunk and destroyed. Were there no other tears?") to encourage students to think about the creativity—and anguish—of daily life. As Brecht's poem illustrates, "important" individuals often claim or receive credit for the sweat and suffering of the many.

After discussing the Brecht poem, students are asked to write a poem that searches out the hidden history—the work life—behind a commodity or event with which they're familiar. One Vietnamese girl, recently arrived, wrote about her experience laboring in the strawberry fields outside Portland:

Three o'clock in the morning
get up in the middle of nightmare
hurry to work
cold and dark
rainy and windy
kneel on the ground
sit day to day
pick one by one
tray to tray
clothes with dust
backs are hurt
close your eyes and
what do you see?
Strawberry all in brain
big and small
hold the money with tear
hope it enough for all year.

As students read their poems aloud, we take notes on the "collective text" that emerges. How does work affect our personal lives? What kind of work is generally ignored by society, and what kind is appreciated? What do we value about work, and what do we dislike? The richness of work experience exposed in this lesson can reveal to students an area for study neglected in the traditional curriculum.

Over the years many teachers have made heroic efforts to correct omissions from textbooks and to include groups long rendered invisible: Blacks, women, Asians, Indians, Mexican-Americans, and others. Now it's time to bring the lives and history of working people out of the closet.



Bigelow's new curriculum, *The Power in Our Hands: A Curriculum on the History of Work and Workers in the United States* (including teacher instructions and reproducible student materials) is available from Monthly Review Press, 122 W. 27th St., New York, NY 10001 (212-691-2555) for $13.50 for members; $15 for non-members, plus $1.50 shipping.

Association member Bill Bigelow teaches social studies at Jefferson High School in Portland, Oregon.

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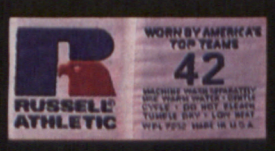

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TECH TALK

Virginia School Gets Supercomputer

The electronic school transformation has begun—and it's bringing new services, improved curriculums, faster and better learning, more efficient use of resources, and, best of all, enthusiastic students and educators.

The Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Annandale, Va., is among the growing number of pioneering schools that use advanced communications and information technology to improve learning and teaching. Already a state-of-the-art learning center, Jefferson recently won a $1 million supercomputer—the first ever placed in a secondary school.

The ETA supercomputer was the prize in Control Data's SuperQuest, a national computational science competition open to all U.S. high schools. The Jefferson student team bested peers in 1,474 other high schools.

"The supercomputer has created a new excitement and interest in science among our students," says Don Hyatt, Jefferson High computer science lab teacher and coach of the math team that won the SuperQuest.

"At first it's like our other computers," Hyatt observes. "You log on, and it feels just the same. Then you realize it's capable of producing 375 million instructions per second."

For Thomas Jefferson students, the supercomputer means a chance to test scientific propositions and do research—whether theoretical, observational, or experimental—that reaches beyond anything they could have imagined. "My students can program ETA with fundamental laws on very complex problems and see things work and what's going to happen," notes Hyatt.

SuperQuest has already produced some results for David Rosen, a Jefferson senior and one of 40 national finalists in the prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search. During last summer's SuperQuest finals in Minnesota, Rosen came up with a better way to let a mainframe computer shift operations from user to user so fast it seems many people are using it simultaneously.

Hyatt notes that his role as a teacher is changing: "When I taught mathematics I was master of my subject, but with ETA, teaching has become cooperative education—there's no more 'Let me tell about everything I know.'"

Control Data and ETA Systems have announced another SuperQuest for 1989 and have asked Kenneth Wilson, the 1982 Nobel Prize winner in physics, to chair the SuperQuest judges panel once again.

Wilson says he was amazed and delighted by the level of scientific sophistication shown by the young people who competed for the supercomputer. *—Ron Holt*

Fairfax County, Va., students and their teacher, Association member Don Hyatt, work on a problem using their school's $1 million supercomputer.

POLITICAL ACTION

NEA-PAC: How Much Do Your Dollars Matter?

Plenty, say members of Congress who support education.

For a member of Congress, the nation's capital can be a very hectic place. Congress is bombarded by a never-ending stream of issues and ideas, pressures and demands.

In such an atmosphere, getting senators and representatives to pay close attention to any one issue—even an issue as important as education—isn't easy. That's where NEA-PAC, NEA's political action arm, comes in.

The dollars that NEA members contribute to NEA-PAC go to support candidates for Congress who support education. Those dollars help focus congressional attention on issues that would otherwise be lost in a sea of good ideas.

"Making an issue stand out in a crowd of important issues is what success in Washington is all about," notes independent Washington lobbyist Les Francis. "That's why everyone involved in public education needs to understand the importance of the role NEA-PAC plays. In this town, the political pundits measure organizational clout by the volume of an organization's voluntary contributions. Without NEA-PAC, it's hard to imagine where education would be today."

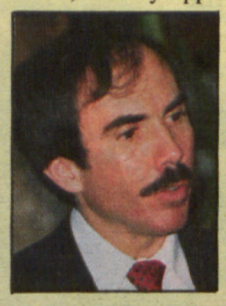
But the best evidence of the difference NEA-PAC makes comes from members of Congress themselves.

Representative Charles Hayes (D-Ill.): "One of the reasons that first led me to decide to run for Congress was my desire to do something to improve young people's opportunities through education. Starting with my first campaign, teachers and school employees have been dependable volunteers. My NEA endorsement, the early contributions from NEA-PAC, and the resulting volunteers got my campaign off and running. I'll never forget what the NEA members did for me."

Representative Nancy Johnson (R-Conn.): "Receiving a NEA-PAC contribution from the NEA members in my district tells me a lot about them and their understanding of how government works. I know they've looked hard at my record and reassured themselves that I am truly committed to improving education. And I know they understand that it would be much harder for me, as a member of Congress, to continue that work without their support. Taking that extra step of voluntarily signing up to contribute to NEA-PAC is a very tangible way of saying, 'I know what it takes to make a difference for education.'"

Representative Dale E. Kildee (D-Mich.): "There is nothing more American, more in keeping with the ideals of our democracy, than getting politically involved. And nobody gets involved more actively than the NEA members in my district. They know my education record—which is 100 percent—thanks to NEA's Congressional Report Card. They interview the candidates on current education issues, and they prove they understand modern-day financial realities through their contributions to NEA-PAC."

Representative Bob Wise (D-W.Va.): "I still remember the early days before my first campaign. A lot of people, including many friends, said I couldn't win. I didn't have enough name recognition, and my opponent had too much money. But I entered the race despite the odds. Looking back, it was the trust our local NEA members had in me that led to my NEA endorsement. The incredible volunteer effort by teachers and that first NEA-PAC contribution, which let us do our first mailing, got our campaign off to a winning start."



NEA created NEA-PAC because federal law requires that direct financial assistance to federal candidates be raised voluntarily. Over the years since 1972, when NEA-PAC gave its first contribution to a candidate for Congress, NEA-PAC has grown substantially. Today NEA-PAC collects close to $2 million per year in contributions from NEA members.

But the potential of 2 million NEA members to make an impact on Congress has only begun to be tapped. Currently, about 20 percent of members are contributing to NEA-PAC.

In this era of federal budget squeezes and underfunded education programs, NEA-PAC needs to be as potent as it can possibly be. Interested in finding out how you can contribute to NEA-PAC's success? Just ask your local Association officers or UniServ staff.

INTRODUCING THE NEA VALUEBUILDER TDA

At retirement, all of us hope to have the financial security to enjoy a comfortable life. Your Association wants to help members plan for their retirement. That's why we are so proud to sponsor a new benefit program that specifically addresses this goal — the NEA ValueBuilder TDA.

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A TDA offers school employees a unique opportunity to reduce current federal (and in most cases state) income taxes and, at the same time, build supplementary tax-deferred retirement income. Your money grows faster in a TDA than in a currently taxable investment with the same interest rate. This is because your money is invested *before* it is taxed, and because you pay no current taxes on any interest or investment earnings. Instead *all* of your money is allowed to grow tax-deferred and compounded. Over time, this can make a substantial difference in the value of your investment.

New custom-tailored benefits

Many months have been spent to tailor the new NEA ValueBuilder TDA to your needs. Without question, it's one of the best TDAs in the

country today. Why? Because of its *flexibility, performance, product features and service.*

Outstanding investment flexibility and control

ValueBuilder provides *ten different investment options,* so you can choose the type of investment strategy that suits you. You direct the allocation of your contributions among the various options. If your goals change, you can transfer funds among nine of these options *at any time without charge.*

Borrow from your account. ValueBuilder's *loan provision* allows you to

AN EXTRAORDINARY NEW TAX-DEFERRED ANNUITY PROGRAM

borrow funds (up to $50,000) at a competitive interest rate, depending on the balance in your account. Minimum loan is $1,000, and you have five years to repay it.

Your contributions are credited if you become disabled

One of the most innovative and valuable benefits of our new ValueBuilder TDA is its *disability provision,* now undergoing regulatory filing. Upon eligibility, TDA contributions will be made for you should you become disabled. If you have a ValueBuilder loan, repayments will be made for you as well!

The "fine print" can make a big difference

Unlike many of the TDAs available today, nine of the ten ValueBuilder investment options feature *no* withdrawal charges and *no* charges or limits on transfers within this "family of funds." (The Long-Term Fixed option, now undergoing regulatory filing, is designed to have a higher interest rate, and does have a withdrawal fee and a limit on transfers.) All ten options feature *no* surrender charge, *no* initiation charge and *no* two-tier interest crediting. These features provide a very important benefit — flexibility!

Exceptional service and convenience

If you've got a question or need account or enrollment assistance, ValueBuilder has a specially staffed NEA Service Center exclusively for Association members. You can also make same-day transfers via a toll-free 800 number. All participants will receive complete quarterly account statements and an exclusive NEA financial newsletter.

An outstanding underwriter

After a comprehensive study, Mutual of America was selected as underwriter for our new TDA. One of the nation's foremost financial companies, Mutual has nearly $5 billion in assets and carries the highest ratings from A.M. Best for its financial operations and from Standard & Poor's for claims-paying ability. The company has over 40 years experience working *exclusively* with not-for-profit organizations.

As the NEA ValueBuilder TDA is cosponsored by the state affiliates, and payroll slots become available, you will receive more detailed information about this exclusive new benefit program. It's worth waiting for!

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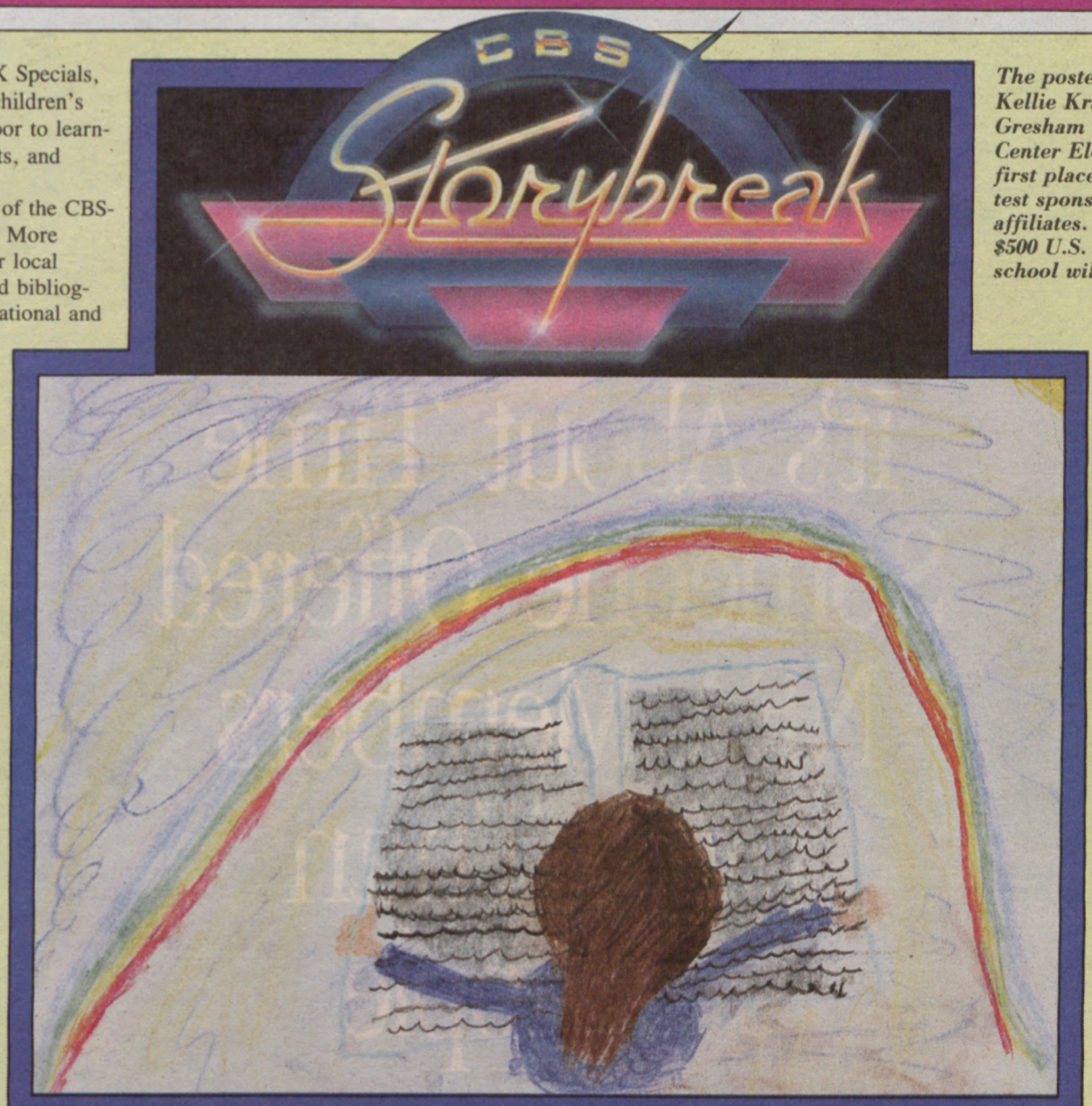

The poster below, created by Kellie Kramer, a fifth grader at Gresham (Nebr.) Attendance Center Elementary School, won first place in a nationwide contest sponsored by CBS and its affiliates. Kellie will receive a $500 U.S. Savings Bond; her school will receive $1,000.

Celebrate the Year of the Young Reader with Saturday morning CBS STORYBREAK Specials. Children's advocate Bob Keeshan (Captain Kangaroo) hosts these half-hour animated programs for youngsters of all ages.

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CBS STORYBREAK Specials air Saturdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m. ET, on the CBS Television Network.

Materials That Make Reading/Writing Fun

► To add beauty to your classroom and provide an intergenerational message about the pleasures of reading, get the Children's Book Council's set of four posters called "Families Reading Together." For details, send a #10 stamped, self-addressed envelope to Materials Brochure, CBC, 67 Irving Pl., P.O. Box 706, New York, NY 10276-0706.

► To learn more about privately funded incentives that can add zest to reading programs, contact Jello™ Reading Program, M. Booth & Associates, 225 W. 34th St., Suite 1500, New York, NY 10001; Pizza Hut's BOOK IT National Reading Incentive Program, 1-800-4-BOOK-IT; and Time, Inc.'s "Time To Read," Time and Life Bldg., New York, NY 10020, 1-212-522-1212.

► To check out word processing programs that might encourage your students to write their own stories, ask a computer dealer to demonstrate materials such as Bank Street StoryBook (grades 3-9) by Mindscape Educational Software, the Explore-A-Story series (grades K-5) by D.C. Heath, Paint With Words (K-4) by MECC, Storymaker (grades 2-6) by Scholastic, Comic Strip Maker (grades 2-8) by Bantam, Kidwriter (grades 1-4) by Spinnaker, Story Board (grades 3-8) by Data Command, and Story Starters (grades 1-8) by Random House.

► Enhance 1989 instructional TV programs with books from the reading list compiled by the Library of Congress and the American Library Association. For a copy, write to PBS, E/SS, 1320 Braddock Pl., Alexandria, VA 22314. Also ask for PBS's Tune In Guide for children's programming—this year it emphasizes learning to read.

► For free annual lists of recommended books, write to "Chosen by Children," American Library Association, 50 Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; "Booklist for Children" ($4.50), The Child Study Children's Book Committee, Bank Street College, 610 W. 112th St., New York, NY 10025; "Books for Children" ($1), Supt. of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; and "Children's Choices," International Reading Association–Children's Book Council Joint Committee, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714.

► Reading takes on new meaning when it includes visually impaired children. A special education teacher or local library can provide "twin vision" and "talking" books so all your students can share in story times.

► Oversized "big books" with large pictures and text often draw young children close to the action, invite choral and unison reading, and inspire dramatization. Cornerstone Books, for example, has available *How To Eat Fried Worms* (one of the Specials) in large print (as well as in audiotapes). Big book publishers include Children's Press and Grey Castle Press.

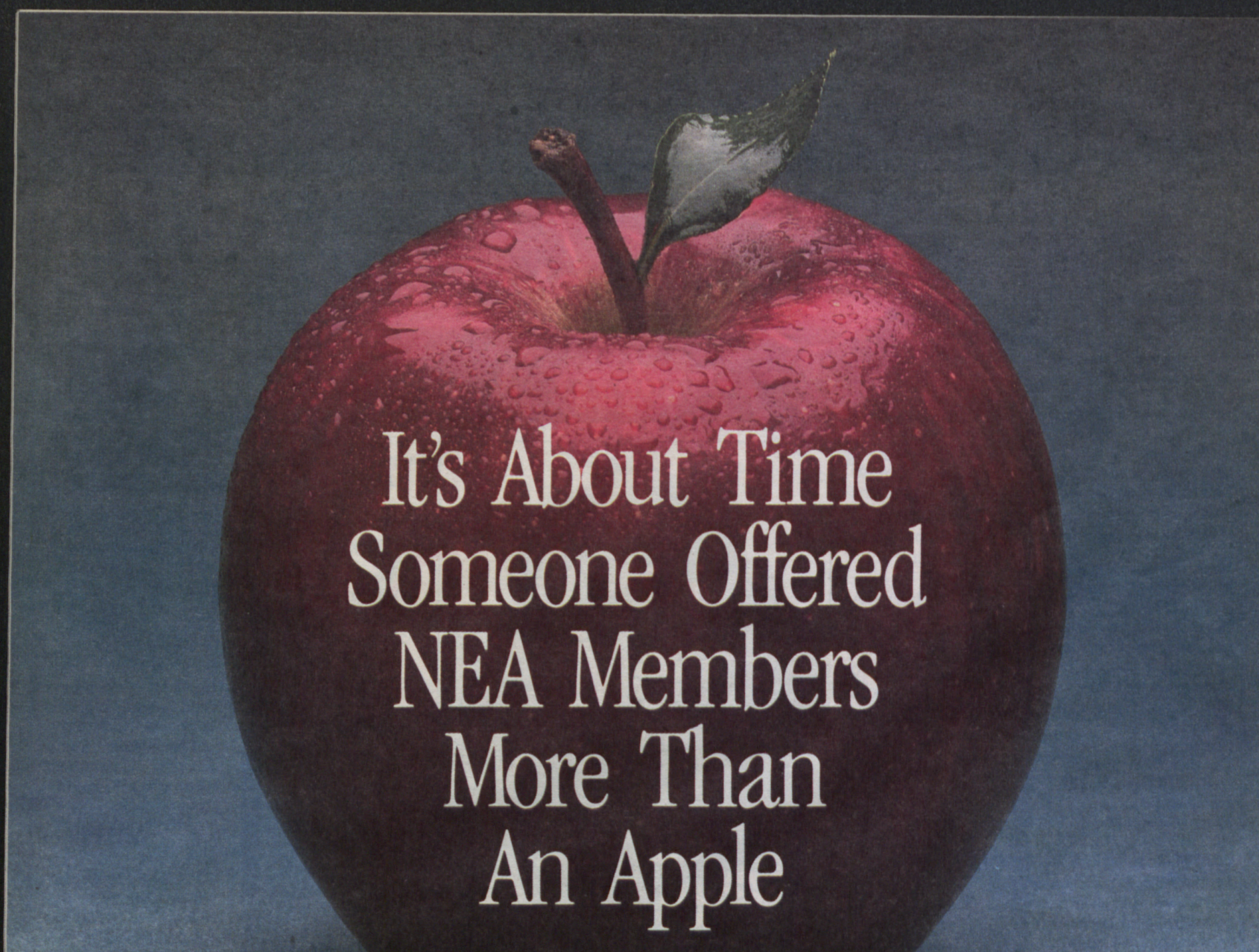
► You can track TV and radio programs adapted from children's literature through KIDSNET's computerized database. KIDSNET also provides detailed program information—grade levels, objectives, awards won, and educational guides available. For more information, contact KIDSNET, Clearinghouse of Children's Television and Radio, 6856 Eastern Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20012, 1-202-291-1400.

► Free booklets: "Helping Your Child Use the Library," from U.S. Dept. of Education, OERI Office of Library Programs, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20208, 1-202-357-6293; "Check This Out: Highlights of Model Library Programs," from OERI's Education Information Branch at the address above, or call 1-800-424-1616 or 626-9854.

Specials Based on These Books

Arnold of the Ducks by Mordecai Gerstein, Harper Junior Books, 1985; *Chocolate Fever* by Robert Kimmel Smith, Dell, 1972; *C.L.U.T.Z.* by Marilyn Z. Wilkes, Dial Young Books, 1982; *The Double Disappearance of Walter Fozbek* by Steve Senn, Hastings House, 1980; *Dragon's Blood* by Jane Yolen, Delacorte Press, 1982; *The Great Ringtail Garbage Caper* by Timothy Foote, Houghton Mifflin, 1980; *The Gammage Cup* by Carol Kendall, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959 (available in libraries); *Grinny* by Nicholas Fisk, Heinemann, 1974 (available in libraries); *Hank the Cowdog* by John R. Erickson, Maverick Books, 1985; *Harry, the Fat Bear Spy* by Gahan Wilson, Dell, 1978; *How To Eat Fried Worms* by Thomas Rockwell, Franklin Watts, 1973; *Hugh Pine* by Janwillem van de Wetering, Houghton Mifflin, 1980; *Jeffrey's Ghost and the Leftover Baseball Team* by David A. Adler, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984 (available in libraries); *Mama Don't Allow* by Thacher Hurd, Harper Junior Books, 1985; *Max and Me and the Time Machine* by Gery Greer and Bob Ruddick, Harper Junior Books, 1988; *The Monster's Ring* by Bruce Coville, Minstrel Books, 1987; *The Pig Plantagenet* by Allen Andrews, Viking, 1980 (available in libraries); *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Camel with the Wrinkled Knees* by Johnny Gruelle, Dell, 1977; *Ratha's Creature* by Clare Bell, Dell, 1987; *Robbut: A Tale of Tails* by Robert Lawson, Viking, 1948 (available in libraries); *The Roquefort Gang* by Sandy Clifford, Houghton Mifflin, 1982; *The Shy Stegasaurus of Cricket Creek* by Evelyn Sibley Lampman, Doubleday, 1955 (available in libraries); *What Happened in Hamelin* by Gloria Skurzynski, Four Winds, 1979; *Witch Cat* by Joan Carris, Harper Junior Books, 1984; *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* by Ai-Ling Louie, Philomel Books, 1982; *Zucchini* by Barbara Dana, Harper Junior Books, 1982.

This guide was written by June Behrmann for KIDSNET, the computerized clearinghouse of children's audio, video, radio, and television, in Washington, D.C. For a longer version, write to CBS Educational Community Services (address above).



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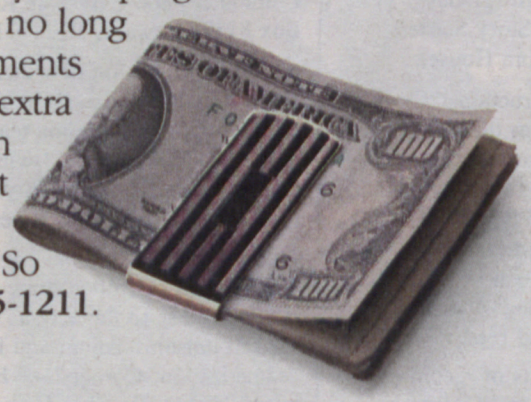

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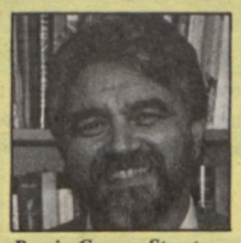
BOOK BEAT

Growing Up Male in America

Three books this month are about the transition from childhood to adulthood in the United States today. Two deal mainly with the process—or lack of it—for young men.

The Men from the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America
By Ray Raphael
University of Nebraska Press. 228 pp. $19.95.



Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California
By James Diego Vigil
University of Texas Press. 202 pp. $22.50; paper, $8.95.

The Search for Structure: A Report on American Youth Today
By Francis A. J. Ianni
The Free Press/ Macmillan. 336 pp. $22.95.

In ***The Men from the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America***, California anthropologist **Ray Raphael** points out that unlike primitive societies, U.S. society today has no rites of passage common to all youth. Without the military draft, we no longer have even boot camp, and the initiation rites that survive—fraternity hazing, for instance—aren't taken all that seriously.

But the wish to prove oneself remains. So some young men—including the 100 mainstream American males Raphael interviewed for this book—make up their own initiations. They decide, say, to become Mr. Universe, or to stake out a new rock-climbing route up Yosemite's El Capitan.

But these self-made initiations are private events, Raphael contends, appreciated only by other initiates. They prove little about manhood. And for many youth, they're zero-sum games in which winners imply losers. If the few prove themselves in medical or law school, what happens to the many who were rejected or didn't even dare apply? Primitive societies do better by their young men, Raphael says: every youth emerges from his rite of passage "with a heightened feeling of self-worth, for his manly status has been affirmed both to himself and to the group."

One group of American males who do have highly formalized rites of passage are gang members. In ***Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California***, **James Diego Vigil** describes Chicano gangs in Los Angeles and its suburbs, an area where he grew up and later worked as a teacher (and Association member, in Norwalk, Calif.), youth worker, and, more recently, anthropologist.

Vigil explains that the core gang members, the "regulars," come from "multiply marginal" families. Whatever the dimension—income, housing, English language proficiency, employment—these families have less than their neighbors.

For local officials to think that breaking up a particular age cohort will end gang activity is a mistake, Vigil warns. As long as the marginal conditions that nurture gangs are present, a new generation will appear.

Fortunately, the connection of many youths to gangs is much more tenuous than is that of the regulars. A new girl friend or enrollment in college ends the gang connection for many peripheral members. Nor should we consider undesirable everything that gang members do, including affecting the "cholo" style in dress and manner, which Vigil describes in great detail. Cholo is a way kids express ethnic loyalty.

In ***The Search for Structure: A Report on American Youth Today***, **Francis A. J. Ianni**, of Teachers College, Columbia University, investigates the transition of youth—boys and girls—to adulthood in 10 U.S. communities.

Ianni and his team were especially attuned to the effects of local institutions—family, school, peer group, criminal justice system—on kids.

"The messages which each of the institutions sends to individual adolescents should be mutually reinforcing rather than disharmonious or even at cross-purposes," Ianni says.

But that isn't always the case, especially for minority youth, Ianni discovered. They get mixed messages: from home (school is important, but stay home today because mother doesn't feel well) and from school (minority kids are told education will take them anywhere, but then are sorted—or *allowed to sort themselves*—into groups for whom expectations are low.)

Ianni calls for communitywide youth plans with consistent goals. "Teenagers then could and should be held accountable at home and in other community settings as well as in school for learning efforts and results."

Finally, on a different tack, in his book ***Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and Its Consequences***, **John Allen Poulos**, mathematics professor at Temple University, has written a book that will make all teachers who are not trained mathematicians—but who teach arithmetic or use a statistic here and there—much more comfortable about what they're doing.

Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and Its Consequences
By John Allen Poulos
Hill and Wang. 135 pp. $16.95.

—Nancy R. Needham

The new NEA Professional Library Book Club announces its current main selection: ***Lives on the Boundary*** by Michael Rose. For information on Club membership, write NEA/PLBC at 230 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ 07647 (1-201-767-4093).

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Your NEA

MAKING NEWS

► **Six Soviet educators** recently visited the U.S. as guests of the NEA. The contingent was headed by Vladimir Shadrikov, first deputy chair of the State Education Committee, who addressed participants at NEA's Second National Conference in San Diego. At a Washington, D.C., briefing for the media on *perestroika* and Soviet education, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell noted that Association representatives have met with Soviet educators in their country twice in the last two years. She stressed that teachers from both nations face similar challenges and that educators everywhere share the same sense of dedication to their responsibilities, their children, and their countries.

► **NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell** recently took part in a panel discussion on adult and postgraduate science education at a conference sponsored by the American Medical Association. Futrell discussed the urgency of developing scholarships for postgraduate study, especially for minority students, and the increasing need for a scientifically literate nation.

Joe Di Dio

► Early last month 53 teachers—each a recipient of a grant to study the humanities—were honored at the White House. Nearly half the **"teacher-scholars"** are NEA members. The five pictured above are, from left: Harold McDuffie, Springdale, Ark.; Jay Cravath, Chandler, Ariz.; Mardella Harris, St. Louis, Mo.; Roderick Laird, Saratoga, Wyo.; and Alan Olds, Arvada, Colo.

The grants, of up to $27,500 each, come from a fund established by *Reader's Digest* founder Dewitt Wallace and are administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. NEH is now accepting applications for next year's grants—deadline is May 1. For more information, call NEH at 1-202-786-0377.

REACHING OUT

NEA Video Library Can Help You...

Looking for a video to help build and strengthen your state or local Association? Look no further. NEA's newly created Video Library has just what you need.

The NEA Video Library is a catalog service that provides exciting and effective Association videotapes to you *at cost*. The ever-growing number of selections include materials suitable for Association training and promotion, community outreach, public service announcements, and more.

See the March 27 issue of the weekly publication *NEA NOW* (mailed to Association reps throughout the country) for a list of available topics and a special order form. For more information, contact Eddy Gattis, NEA Broadcast Services, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

...Tape on ESP Is a First Offering

One of the first offerings of NEA's new Video Library will be of special interest to educational support personnel.

NEA Broadcast Services has just completed a series of four public service announcements especially designed to honor the contribution of school support staff to our public schools. All four television spots conclude with the reminder: "There's more to running good schools than you might think."

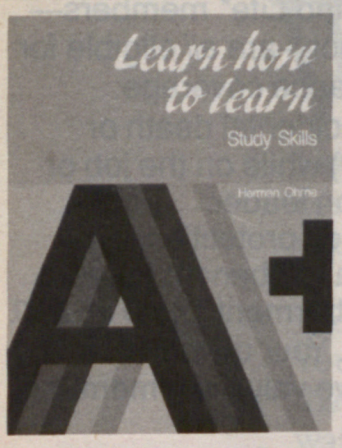
Two of the spots focus on specific jobs—bus driver and food service worker. The remaining two portray a wide array of ESP job classifications. Each is available in Spanish as well as English.

Register Now for WCOTP Conference

Plan now to attend the biennial conference for U.S. and Canadian citizens, sponsored by the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, to be held June 9-11 in San Diego, Calif. This year's conference theme is "The Role of Education Organizations in Promoting Social Justice and Democratic Freedoms."

The $50 registration fee covers conference materials, two continental breakfasts, refreshments, and an evening dinner cruise.

Registration is limited. If you plan to attend, contact Robert Miner at NEA Center (1-202-822-7192) as soon as possible.



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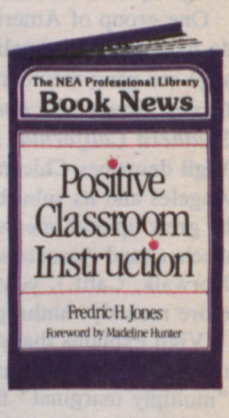

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Choosing A Financial Planner

THE FIVE C's

If you've been getting calls from financial planners recently, you're not alone. Black Monday (October 17, 1987) didn't cause the economic recession many expected, but it has caused a mini-recession in the financial services business. As the average person shies away from investment, many brokers and planners, feeling the pinch, are stepping up their efforts to get more clients.

The right financial planner can give you valuable assistance, but many unqualified people have moved into this almost completely unregulated field. Entrusting your life's savings to a stranger is a serious step. You wouldn't even buy a house or car without comparison shopping, so don't choose a planner without carefully checking the "Five Cs."

Credentials

One study found that the average financial planner has less education than his or her customers! Since it takes no special training to be called a "financial planner," the first thing you should check is the background of the person you're considering.

Start by looking for credentials from a reputable trade organization. Three significant titles, and the groups that award them, are—

► "Certified Financial Planner (CFP)," College for Financial Planning, Denver, Colo., 1-303-755-7101.

► "Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC)," The American College, Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1-215-896-4500.

► "Registry of Financial Planners," International Association for Financial Planning, Atlanta, Ga., 1-404-252-9600.

Take the time to call and confirm that the planner you're interested in has indeed completed the necessary classes and examinations. And keep in mind that although they may have agreed to abide by a code of ethics, that doesn't guarantee their personal integrity.

What's more, credentials from a trade group are meaningless if they're not kept up to date. In today's fast-changing investment world, make sure your planner can show you proof of continuing education and training.

Many planners are professionals in other fields, such as insurance agents or stockbrokers, who have branched out. They may have little experience outside their own specialty. Someone who was at the top of the class in a prestigious law school, for example, doesn't necessarily know any more about insurance than you do.

Finally, look for someone with a track record of three or more years in financial planning or a closely related field so you can evaluate the wisdom of past recommendations. Be wary of anyone who's new to your community or who operates without a staff or office—it's too easy for someone like that to leave town at a moment's notice.

Compensation

It's essential to understand how you'll pay the planner. Most earn commissions on the financial products they sell their clients. There's nothing wrong with that as long as the client's aware of it—otherwise, there's a potential conflict of interest. These planners usually charge low fees or none, but don't think this means you're not paying for the service. When you pay an 8.5 percent commission on a mutual fund, for instance, the value of your investment must go up more than 9 percent before you can recoup your costs.

Other planners earn no commissions, but charge explicit fees. These may be hourly costs of $50 or more, an annual percentage of assets managed, charges based on trading activity, or some combination of the three. These planners are often very costly, and since they don't sell the products they recommend, they can be less convenient—but they do avoid conflicts of interest.

Content

Ask to examine financial plans done for other clients. A good plan must cover all six areas of personal financial planning:

► Money management: This includes determining your net worth, cash flow, and financial goals, and a budget to meet your goals.

► Investments: A planner should help you build an "Investment Pyramid" of investments ranging from rock-solid to adventurous.

► Risk management: This is not just insurance, but a strategy for identifying and handling all the potential threats to your finances.

► Tax planning: Remember, it's not what you earn, it's what you keep.

► Retirement planning: Preserve your standard of living after retirement.

► Estate and survivor planning: Make sure your wishes are carried out and your survivors are protected from unnecessary risk after your death.

A good plan gives several alternative courses of action, with the pros and cons of each. It also spells out the assumptions made about economic factors like interest and inflation rates. It's not vague—but neither does it sell particular products.

Commitment

Choose a planner who's interested in working with people with your level of income and assets. Some planners cater to wealthy clients, others to certain professions or age groups.

Ask for references to at least three current clients, and talk to them. Are they satisfied with the advice they're getting? Is the planner easy to contact? Is the planner's staff helpful? Are the statements clear and easy to understand?

Avoid planners who are ready to make recommendations without carefully interviewing you. No plan can be adequate unless it takes into account your present financial condition, your goals, your willingness to accept risk, and other individual factors.

Client-Oriented

Your financial plan will need to be continually adjusted. Look for a planner who's willing to enter into a long-term relationship, not someone who's just interested in a quick sale, and who may move on to another career.

A good planner will give you regular statements describing the progress of your plan.

Never give a planner permission to invest your money without consulting you first, and never put money into something you don't understand. Run, don't walk, away from any financial planner who claims to offer guaranteed, no-risk, above-average return investments. Some financial planners are nothing more than old-fashioned con artists, disguising fraud as tax shelters, commodity schemes, and other legitimate-sounding investments.

Getting Help from Your Association

Before you turn to a financial planner, you need to do some groundwork. Determine your net worth and cash flow, list your present insurance coverage, and develop a set of financial goals. The process will help you select the planner who's right for you.

As an NEA member, you can get a free copy of *First Steps to Financial Planning* from NEA Special Services. This 28-page guide is part of a Consumer Education program designed to help you understand your needs and options for many kinds of financial planning. For more information, call the toll-free member service line, 1-800-637-4636, or write NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe Street, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850.

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Cancer Insurance: A Poor Investment

This year, nearly 1 million Americans will find out they have cancer. At some point in their lives, some 71 million people alive in the U.S. today—nearly one-third of our total population—will receive the same diagnosis.

With statistics like these, it's no wonder many people think they need extra insurance to protect them from the high cost of cancer treatments. But the truth is, cancer insurance—or any insurance against a specific illness—isn't necessary or prudent. The best protection against medical bills is good comprehensive health insurance coverage.

Cancer insurance has been compared to automobile insurance that covers only the bumper of a car. It won't cover anything not diagnosed as cancer—even complications caused by cancer or its treatment.

As early as 1978, *Consumer Reports* stated: "The cost of cancer treatment is often fearfully high. Nevertheless, we don't recommend buying cancer insurance. The cancer insurance policies that CU [Consumer's Union] examined offer only fragmentary protection against the cost of treatment. And they offer no coverage at all for numerous other diseases that can also be expensive to treat."

It was good advice 11 years ago, and it's even better advice now. Because of the catastrophic health care bill passed last year, Medicare now limits patient liability for hospital costs to $564 per year. Beginning in 1990, Medicare will limit out-of-pocket expenses for covered doctor's services to a maximum of $1,370 per year.

This means that if you're covered by Medicare, you have no need for a cancer insurance policy. If you want to fill the gaps left by Medicare, NEA Special Services suggests you look into a federally certified "Medigap" insurance plan offered by a reputable insurance company. These plans give you far more protection for your money. (In many states, the Association offers members over 65 a Medicare Supplement policy through Special Services. For more information, call NEA Special Services Response Center at 1-800-637-4636.)

Those not eligible for Medicare may think cancer insurance is an inexpensive alternative to comprehensive health insurance. They're wrong. Too often and too late, they learn that saving money by buying cancer insurance is a false economy.

Even when cancer is diagnosed, cancer insurance policies often hide in the fine print preexisting condition limitations, long waiting periods, and severe benefit restrictions. Studies done by the National Cancer Foundation and the Federal Trade Commission found that typical cancer insurance policies pay out only about half as much of the premiums they collect as comprehensive medical plans do. The FTC concluded, "Beyond question, a person with a limited amount of money should search for the best comprehensive plan he or she can afford."

There is no denying that a good, individual health insurance policy can be expensive and hard to find, especially for retired people. Contact your state's retirement system for recommendations and shop among insurance companies and local Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) if they're available.

For help in comparing policies, NEA Special Services (see above number) offers a free consumer guide.

After age 65, many other causes of death increase at faster rates than cancer deaths. As you get older, then, it becomes more important than ever to avoid "dread disease" insurances that may never pay off.

—Stefanie Weiss

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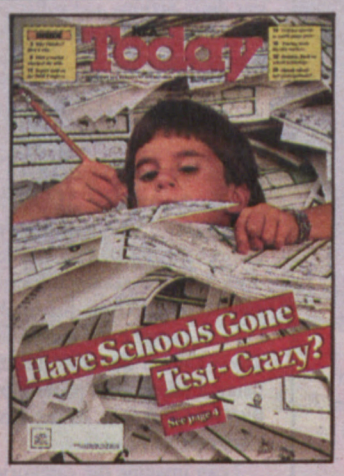
Looking Back

A second look at stories from previous issues of **NEA Today.**



Association locals in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area have been formalizing plans for a joint conference on the issue of standardized student testing ("Is Student Testing Out of Control?," Nov. 1988).

Standardized testing is a many-faceted problem facing all teachers, and the conference hopes to address all its angles, explains Prince George's County (Md.) Educators Association President Marjorie Spirer. PGCEA will be a conference participant.

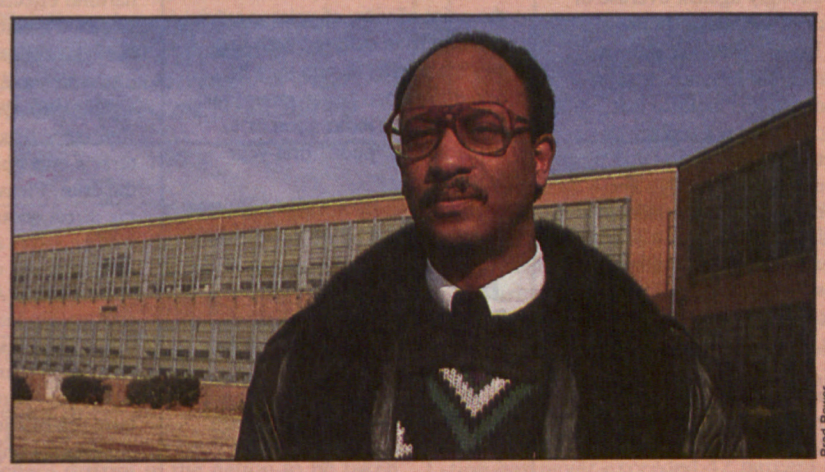
"When we have to teach to the test, we often lose our excitement about teaching," says Spirer. "We get the feeling that we're no longer trying to educate the whole child."

Spirer notes that the conference will examine community feelings about standardized testing, questioning particularly whether the exams really test what the community feels the children need to know. "We'll be looking for ways other than testing to ensure that students have learned the skills and the knowledge they need to succeed in life," she says.

New Jersey science teacher Charles Walker has gotten even more new equipment to stock a lab at Camden's Pyne Poynt School. Walker, whose old lab hadn't been replaced two years after it was destroyed by fire, was the subject of a New Jersey Education Association ad last fall that read: "Charles Walker teaches science with a blackboard and borrowed books. Imagine if he had a microscope."

Walker received a supply of new equipment last winter (People, March) and now, reports NJEA, he's gotten even more. Pioneer Communications recently donated a laser disc player and a 26" TV monitor; Optical Data has given software; Prentice-Hall publishers have sent textbooks; and an anonymous donor has provided money for more equipment.

Notes a sales manager at Pioneer Communications: "When I saw the ad, I was impressed with the look in this teacher's eyes. I thought, why not improve his classroom rather than just restore what he had before the fire?"



Brad Bower

John Williams

Baldwin (N.Y.) Junior High industrial arts teacher Bob Sawyers ("One Man's Crusade for Safe Schools," Dec. 1986) has finally won the first round in his case against the Baldwin school district. Sawyers has battled for more than a decade to compel the district to remedy health and other safety hazards in his school.

In a ruling dated Oct. 5, 1988, then U.S. Secretary of Labor Ann McLaughlin reversed an earlier decision by an administrative law judge that the Toxic Substance Control Act didn't entitle Sawyers to a hearing as a "whistleblower."

Although the district may appeal to the circuit court, Sawyers will probably get the chance to show that the district retaliated against him for environmental complaints he'd registered with both state and federal agencies. NEA/NY attorneys represent Sawyers.

A personal note: Sawyers has malignant melanoma, a skin cancer doctors say is related to toxic exposure at work. He's making progress on the medical front too: the cancer now appears to have been arrested.

Texas is the nation's second largest bulk purchaser of textbooks ("At Last, Is There a Decent Textbook in Your Future?" March), so it exerts a strong influence on the content of texts used throughout the U.S.

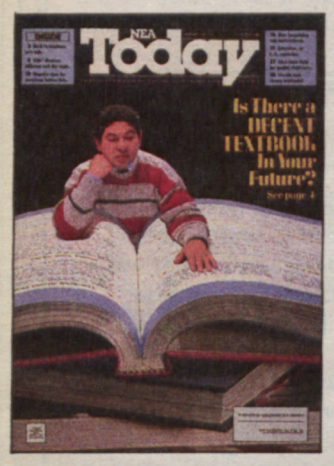
Now, for the first time, the state is holding hearings on whether the theory of evolution should be included in all biology texts. (Texas schools have been required to teach evolution for years, but there's no requirement that all textbooks cover the topic.)

Textbook critic Elizabeth Judge, of the Houston-based Broader Perspectives, Inc., says biology texts currently in Texas classrooms generally skirt the topic of evolution because of pressure from fundamentalists in 1984, when current texts were adopted. Before then, the state required equal coverage of the theories of evolution and creationism in those science books that dealt with human origin.

Texas Council for Science Education President Steven Schafersman feels inclusion of evolution would ". . .end the long history of censorship of the most important process of biology, the evolution of life."

The state board of education is expected to make its decision sometime in the next few weeks. A ruling in favor of mentioning evolution would affect books bought for 1991-92 and the five succeeding years.

Letters



Textbook Graphics

"Is There a Decent Textbook in Your Future?" (March) comes out rather strongly against overuse of graphics in textbooks. In the boxed list of "textbook reforms" advocated, for instance, it says: "Rededicate textbooks to text; graphics should not replace or compete with text."

I concur most heartily. The problem is also very evident in college-level texts, many of which apparently attempt to imitate TV screens. In my opinion, students paying $35-plus for such texts are getting gypped in more ways than one.

I found it amusing and ironic, however, that the March issue of *NEA Today* itself is loaded with colorful graphics—in my opinion, a classic example of not practicing what is preached! At first glance, I thought it was *USA Today*! Perhaps a re-evaluation of format is in order here also.

J. H. Foegen
Winona State College
Winona, Minnesota

Teacher Salaries

It is sad to read about Allen Hogie ("When It Comes to Pay, New Teachers Get Shortchanged," Feb.), who teaches mathematics in South Dakota on a starting salary of $15,400. In the meantime, on Dec. 6, 1988, the U.S. Secretary of Education proclaimed that "...students in this country are not learning much about science and math. Compare our high school students' achievements to that of their age-mates in other countries....The top five percent of our high school students know less about mathematics than the average high school student in Japan."

This continued decline in student aptitude is due largely to the manner in which our society treats teachers, and educational reforms are badly needed. It is not pleasant to see a teacher at the end of the month who has a mere $40 to spend on food and entertainment, especially when there are others within our society—baseball players, for instance—who make much, much more.

Consider this: the combined salaries of the 10 highest paid baseball players is equivalent to that of 1,546 starting teachers in North Dakota, or 1,287 teachers receiving the national average teacher's salary.

Del Ebadi
Topeka, Kansas

I believe the title of the salary article should be "All Teachers Get Shortchanged!"

Yes, beginning salaries are low, but you'd find an even worse graph if you added experience! Not only do people not find the beginning pay desirable, but what does the graph look like after 5 to 10 years?

Our district has even gone so far as to ask the union to drop step one from the schedule, because it's an embarrassment. But from the point of view of veteran teachers who have suffered with this pay scale, why should they be asked to forego larger raises, just so the district looks good or to bring up the "poor" first-year teacher?

Judy Thomas
San Mateo, California

Just Teach Science

The February "Research Clues" is just about the silliest thing *NEA Today* has ever printed.

How could anybody ever believe we could get more women into science and engineering through counseling, math clinics, and talking to the parents?

The obvious solution, and the only effective one, is to have early instruction by teachers who know something about science and who have the time, facilities, and materials to do it right.

A lot of good science teaching can be done under poor conditions by teachers who know how. Unfortunately, most elementary teachers—along with their supervisors and most other adults—know nearly nothing about science. If we expect to get more girls, and more boys, too, into technical fields, we had better find ways to help teachers succeed. We certainly don't need more bureaucrats to wave the flag.

John E. Beach
Navarre, Ohio

Classroom Videos

I was pleased to read the article concerning the use of video in the classroom ("Video Sparks Student Interest, Helps Teachers, Too," Feb.). Our fifth grade class recently completed a video that tells the story of our state, Nebraska. Our governor, Kay Orr, agreed to appear in our video just as the governor of Alabama did in the February story. It proved to be an excellent review of the students' fourth grade study of their state.

We then wrote to a few schools in different states to see if there was any interest in swapping videos, so that we could compile a library of different state videos that could be used in our fifth grade study of the regions of the United States. Right now there are five schools from five different states participating in our exchange.

I am writing this letter to see if there are any other schools around the U.S. that would be interested in joining us next year. If any teachers are interested, they can write to me at Norris Educational Regions Video Exchange (NERVE), 2011 South Cotner, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Daniel Tharp
Lincoln, Nebraska

Ritalin's Risks

I write to express concern over Michael F. McQuaid's letter (Feb.) regarding the stimulant Ritalin. Since Mr. McQuaid could apparently find no evidence of the harmful effects of this "best researched medication currently in use with children," let me provide him with some.

The 1987 *Physician's Desk Reference* lists the manufacturer's own opinions concerning the drug. Please note the following direct quotation: "Sufficient data on safety and efficiency of long-term use of Ritalin are not yet available. Although a causal relationship has not been established, suppression of growth (i.e., weight and/or height gain) has been reported with the long-term use of stimulants in children...Long-term effects of Ritalin in children have not been well established."

The second book I picked up in the nurse's library was *The Nurse's Drug Handbook*, Third Edition, by Lorbl and Spratto. Page 600 notes, "The mechanism of action of methylphenidate (Ritalin) is not known, but it manifests pharmacologic effects similar to amphetamines. Drug may cause psychological dependence."

Perhaps there are extreme cases that warrant the risk involved in forcing a child to ingest this powerful and addictive drug about which even the manufacturer will not speculate as to long-term side effects. However, I think those cases would surely be few in number.

Floyd Baker
Rolla, Missouri

Kids and TV

In response to William Dietz, M.D. ("Kids and TV," Dec.), a child's brain is like a muscle—the more active it is during childhood, the better it develops. Kids' TV is a drug that stuns and tranquilizes youngsters and prevents their talking, playing, doing things, reading, and socializing.

According to TV industry statistics, American children ages 2 to 11, on the average, view TV 30 hours a week, 1,500 hours a year, 15,000 hours before they enter junior high school. This means one-third of youngsters' waking hours, during their formative years, is spent doing nothing.

Small wonder that a survey of 500,000 schoolchildren in California, grades 6-12, indicated that the more TV a child watched, the less the child knew. Proof of the adverse affects: simply observe your child viewing TV. Do you believe such long periods of immobility and silence are mentally stimulating?

Of course, newspaper, radio, and TV are not going to tell us that TV's real menace is the *time* stolen from better things to do; they all profit from TV advertising. They will permit criticism of program content—it's violent, sexist, or foolish—but they will allow no serious comment about the vital *time* lost from normal mind-developing activities.

If you want more information about the menace of kids' TV and what you can do about this peril to our children, I suggest reading *The Plug-in Drug*, by Marie Winn, Viking Penguin, 1985.

This line of reasoning may differ from Dr. Deitz's, but is held by others who would like a voice in NEA letters.

Justin H. Wenger
San Diego, California

Clay Stomp II

I'd like to thank all of the people who ordered T-Shirts for our "Clay—A Healing Way" American-Soviet mural project (People, Nov. 1988). We have received orders from 35 states.

I'd like again to invite any persons interested in participating in the clay stomp to come to the Summerfest grounds on the Milwaukee, Wis., lakefront at 12 noon on Sunday, June 11.

Milwaukee public television will be filming a documentary of this project in Milwaukee and Leningrad.

For more information or T-shirts, contact W.E.S.R.-Clay Project, Suite 233, P.O. Box 17900, Glendale, WI 53217.

Joel Pfeiffer
Hartland, Wisconsin

Role Models

The teachers I work with are a well-meaning lot, with their hearts in the right places, but after teaching for three or eight or 12 years, have we forgotten the importance of modeling?

Before we march our classes to the auditorium to hear a 45-minute concert, we tell our children to listen, to pay attention, to be a polite audience...and then we sit there and grade papers during the entire performance.

We bend over backwards with our charts and incentives and reward systems to encourage leisure time reading, and then during our daily "sustained silent reading" time, *we* work at our desks *doing lesson plans* instead of reading a big, fat, juicy novel for our children to see.

We regularly limit our *students'* trips to the drinking fountain, and yet think nothing of having a cup of coffee or can of pop on *our* desks all day long, sipping away at our every whim.

Remember, children learn more from who we are than from what we say. Let's start thinking about our daily actions and reflect on what the children are *really* learning from us.

Kathleen Deegan
Oak Park, Illinois

Teacher Awards

During this time of year, several award presentations are televised for movies, television, music, etc. Could you envision a televised awards presentation for teaching?

I can imagine the award: the Silver Cup of Socrates (teaching being a bittersweet profession) or the Golden Apple, or the Golden Lamp (as in Aladdin).

I can imagine the categories: Teacher of the Year chosen by peers, Teacher of the Year chosen by PTO, Teacher of the Year chosen by the administration, Teacher of the Year chosen by the students, Best Integrated Lesson Plan, Best Field Trip, Most Effective Science Curriculum for the Zth grade, and so on. We could easily last an evening.

Sponsors? Educational materials producers, textbook publishers, toy manufacturers, educational publications, federal programs.

Susan Yost
Woodlyn, Pennsylvania

Saving the Earth

I am a second grade teacher in New Jersey. This past year I was honored with the Governor's Teacher Recognition Award from my school district.

I have become increasingly concerned about many environmental issues facing us and our future generations. With the award's grant money I have established a junior environmentalist group in our elementary school.

As part of our holiday project in December, our school earned money for the preservation of Antarctica by recycling and becoming involved with protecting our environment. We now would like to reach out to other children across the United States in our efforts to preserve Antarctica as a World Park for all people.

I am asking that you help in our special effort. For background information, petitions to sign, and places for the children to write letters to, please contact me at High Bridge Elementary School, 40 Fairview Ave., High Bridge, NJ 08829.

Diane C. Cuniberti
Three Bridges, New Jersey

Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

Debate

Should States Take Over 'Bankrupt' School Districts?

Paula Goble

Jane Rice Spurlock is a sixth grade teacher at Prestonsburg (Kentucky) Elementary School. She's also public relations chair of the Floyd County Education Association.

YES

Tom Favia is dean of students at James J. Ferris High School, Jersey City, New Jersey. Favia is also vice-president of the Jersey City Education Association.

New Jersey Newsphoto

NO

The notion of education reform by state takeover is a controversial one. Nine states—Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas—have officially endorsed it. State boards of education in these states can now legally intervene in the operation of local school districts alleged to be afflicted with low student achievement or other serious and intractable problems. But even in those states, the jury's still out.

In January 1989, Kentucky's state board of education voted unanimously to intervene in the management of our school district in Floyd County. District officials are still in place, but they can no longer act in most areas without the approval of the state department of education.

The source of the state board's authority to take this unprecedented action is the 1984 Kentucky Educational Improvement Law. The law doesn't use the word "bankrupt." Instead, it speaks of "educationally deficient school districts." To identify such districts, the state department of education evaluates every Kentucky district annually in four areas: student achievement, student attendance, dropout rate, and financial soundness.

If a school district is repeatedly deficient in all four areas, the state can go so far as to remove its board and superintendent. That hasn't happened to us.

But Floyd County has been deficient in at least three areas since the first evaluation, in 1985. Today we remain deficient in attendance, test scores (student achievement), and finances. Having made a judgment that our district has not improved its performance, the state board has chosen—as the law allows—to limit the authority of the local superintendent and school board in financial, personnel, instructional, and student discipline matters.

The intervention has just begun, and we don't know what we face down the road. But, along with most of my colleagues, I welcome the chance for positive change. Floyd County is a rural area in eastern Kentucky with high unemployment in its principal industry—coal mining. We know all too well the problems our students face. We're willing to trade the known for the unknown when the unknown contains at least the possibility of improvement.

Last year the superintendent invited the National Academy of School Executives to conduct a curriculum audit of our system. The audit cited rampant nepotism and the "shadiest kind of crass politics" in personnel decisions. Because of inconsistent management, it found, our 22-school district was more like 22 school districts.

The audit didn't provide the legal basis for the state intervention. Without the intervention, in fact, the audit's recommendations would have been only suggestions. But now we're assured they'll be implemented with state assistance at no financial cost to the district. Of course there will be local costs in staff time and energy.

Most Floyd County teachers are glad about the intervention for another reason, too: we hope it will help break down the wall that has existed for years between teachers and local school board members. The need for cooperation among teachers, community, and administration has been a consistent theme both in the curriculum audit and in intervention rationales.

The board's unresponsiveness to the Floyd County Education Association's suggestions for tackling our overwhelming problems had demoralized many of us. We had come to doubt that we'd ever move out of our dark ages. The state intervention gives us a chance.

As the curriculum audit noted about our county, the "time for action has long since been due. The children have no more time."

State intervention in "educationally bankrupt" school districts is a drastic political measure—with no guarantee that schools will improve.

Intervention became legal in New Jersey in the fall of 1987. In the spring of 1988, Jersey City became the first school district in the nation to be taken over by the state.

The New Jersey law gives the state superintendent authority to dismiss the board, the superintendent, and central office administrators. It streamlines the process for dismissing principals. The jobs of teachers and support staff are not directly at risk.

So far, the state has taken away from the elected Jersey City school board authority over all personnel decisions and over financial decisions involving more than $5,000. The board is fighting the takeover through the courts, but the state has mounted a search for a state-appointed superintendent anyway. To date, no one has been found.

Schools in New Jersey become vulnerable to state intervention when they cannot meet the state's certification standards. The problem facing most school districts that cannot achieve state certification is money. They don't have enough.

None of the provisions of New Jersey's intervention law require increased school funding. Nor do they provide resources to directly improve instruction offerings, facilities, supplies, or anything else connected with the education of students.

Jersey City is New Jersey's second largest city. Long a center of manufacturing and shipping, it began to slip economically during the 1960s and '70s, as the heavy industry that made up its economic base failed or moved out. At the same time, population shifts weakened the local tax base.

During this period of "rust belt" decline, the average municipality in New Jersey had to shoulder 67 percent of the cost of public schools from local real estate taxes.

Considering that the state's contribution has never exceeded 42 percent of school costs, the decline in financial resources available to education in our urban centers is not surprising.

The state government hasn't seen fit to pursue tax reform or school finance reform or to find the additional funding our poorest cities need to catch up to the wealthier suburban areas. Until such reform takes place, no amount of "intervention" will be effective.

As for our Jersey City schools, we do have severe problems—but we have successes, too. For example, our Academic High School is one of only five high schools in the state to have every one of its students pass the state-mandated High School Proficiency Test.

That's hardly failing. In fact it's a tribute to the hard work of JCEA members at Academic High as well as at the city's elementary schools, whose graduates attend Academic High.

When our state, and all the states, stop inflicting top-down education reform schemes on schools, schools will improve. When they stop threatening and start encouraging, school staffs and students will believe in them. When they stop worrying about "outcomes" and start worrying about how children learn, education will improve.

When they stop talking and start listening to what school employees say must happen if schools are to become better places for children to learn, education reform will become a reality.

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